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Mind-reading phones, 3D Internet shopping

Ehem: Avoid asking favors from politicos

By Christian V. Esguerra

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, January 22, 2007 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 45 P18

Gov't to focus on six projects worth P60B

By Doris C. Dumlao

SIX PRIORITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS OF the government worth over P60 billion, including Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, are scheduled to start operations this year, according to Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap.

Yap, chair of Malacañang's task force on civil land-use monitoring, identified the five other

CONTD. A2

'Final battles vs Abus at hand'

By Alcuin Papa

THE MILITARY YESTERDAY BRACED ITself for "final battles" with the Abu Sayyaf and placed its troops on nationwide alert to thwart revenge attacks following the death of the terror group's leader Khadaffy Janjalani.

Shortly before the government confirmed on Saturday the death of the Abu Sayyaf emir (chieftain), Janjalani's followers ambushed a military convoy in Sulu, killing one soldier and wounding seven others.

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said his troops "can feel that the final battles are at hand."

"The end of the Abu Sayyaf is near," he told the Inquirer. "The soldiers are eager to finish it ... They want to be part of the final battles. They want to take advantage of the fact that the group is leaderless."

Esperon said succeeding military operations against the Abu Sayyaf—whom he estimated to number a little more than 300 men—would be "ferocious and faster in tempo."

"We'll give them no quarter, we have to hit all the remaining leaders while they're in a crisis," Esperon separately told The Associated Press.

Janjalani's family refused to accept his death and insisted he was still alive as far as they were concerned, despite a DNA test carried out by US authorities that confirmed that the body unearthed in the jungles of Sulu was that of the country's most wanted man. (See related story on Page A18.)

AFP spokesperson Col. Bartolome Bacarro said the military had raised its alert status to its highest level of "red." "In Mindanao, the alert was at 'extreme critical level,' meaning more terror attacks were possible, he said.

"We are bracing ourselves for retaliatory attacks, like bombings and attacks on soldiers. We are ready to preempt probable attacks," Bacarro said.

FINAL A18

MARINES of First Recon Class (1): They got "sonic" of Abu Sayyaf. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Prayers doomed Janjalani

HILLARY Clinton's presidential campaign website: The front-runner has just stepped onto the stage. REUTERS

Hillary makes US presidential race most exciting in history

WASHINGTON—SEN. HILLARY Clinton has plunged into the 2008 US presidential race as immediate favorite to win her party's nomination, but her polarizing image means Democratic rivals like Barack Obama and John Edwards have a chance to steal it from her.

Her long-awaited entry into the race opened up what promises to be one of the most exciting and groundbreaking political contests in US history—pitting Clinton, determined to become the first American woman president, against Obama, who aims to be the first African-American in the White House.

"I'm in. And I'm in to win," Clinton said in a video announcement on her website on Saturday.

Four days earlier, Senator Obama from Illinois signaled his own plans to fight for the nomination,

HILLARY A19

OBAMA: Don't count him out yet.

LAST INTERVIEW

Janjalani: Prophet gave order to kidnap

By Ostavio A. Dinampo

[EDITOR'S NOTE: WITH THE *confirmed death of Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy A. Janjalani, what is believed to be his last extended interview, conducted by Octavio A. Dinampo, a professor of Mindanao State University (MSU)-Sulu, on Feb. 27, 2006, somewhere in the hinterlands of Basilan, is being 'declassified,' as it were. It is part of some field research undertaken by the South-South Network (SSN) for Non-State Armed Group Engagement in preparation for a coming comprehensive book on Philippine armed groups. It was made available to the Inquirer by SSN Regional Focal Point for Asia and occasional Inquirer contributor Solleman M. Santos Jr. It provides a leader's insider view of the Abu Sayyaf, an insight into its origins, its nature, its thinking, its jihad (struggle), and more to prospects, relevant even after the recent deaths of Janjalani and other Abu Sayyaf leaders. The interview was conducted wholly in Tausug and translated into English by Dinampo himself, then slightly edited by Santos that was unsupervised.]*

OCTAVIO A. DINAMPO (OD): I am Octavio Dinampo, teaching at MSU-Sulu and currently engaged by the South-South Network (SSN) to conduct a research on the theme "The Abu Sayyaf—Rebel, Bandit, or Terrorist?"

Khadaffy A. Janjalani (KJ): Whew, that's a big deal, indeed. Is it a government project?

OD: No, this is an NGO matter, they want to establish the truth about your organization.

KJ: That's good if like that. Soon, how can I be of service?

OD: Fact-finder, we would like to know direct from you about the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). From the very beginning as much as possible.

KJ: The late ustadz (scholar of certain status—referring to his elder brother and ASG founder Abdurajak Abubakar Janjalani) was a man who desired nothing other than becoming religious and having peace in the homeland. Proof of this, his education church not only an life examples, but also on life spiritual, until he became a teacher in the madrasah (Muslim school). But the problem, the oppressive soldiers had committed so much abuses in Basilan then, that he was compelled to also take the tadjels of calling attention to these during Khadaffy Jan-

JANJALANI A18

Lone voice in jungle attracted Marines

By Artye dela Cruz
Contributor

IT WAS NOT A GLOBAL positioning device (GPS) or some other sophisticated monitoring equipment that finally ended the run of Khadaffy Janjalani.

Janjalani's own voice to the early hours of Sept. 4, 2006, as he sang and prayed hymns from the Koran led to the discovery of his hiding place in the jungles of Sulu.

But it was the instinct of a young lieutenant to immediately attack that delivered the deadly blow, ending the long and costly hunt for the mysterious Abu Sayyaf chieftain.

At least, that was the view from the side of the heavens—given by the soldiers who had been deployed in Sulu to hunt down the Abu Sayyaf and their Jemaah Islamiyah allies.

When the Muslim reverents

PRAYERS A17

SPECIAL PEOPLE

Growing up with Gabe

By Bill P. Fortunato
Night Editor

(Last of a series)

THE "GROWING UP" IN THE title does not refer to my 20-year-old son Gabriel, or Gabe, who has autism, but to me.

At 55, I've been through school twice—from kindergarten to college. This is my second go-round. But I learned so much more the second time around—with Gabe as my teacher.

Before Gabe was born, I was an irresponsible fellow who grew up spoiled, took things as they came, and did not really think much about the future.

In May 1980, Gabe came into the world (our daughter Isabel—Bela—was born in 1982) and our family was complete. Living in the United States then, we found it easy to work and then travel some,

GROWING A19

iTEAM Report
Fernando del Mundo
Chief

GABE AND DAD: The child is father to the man.

Iloilo raid shows GMA admin fascistic

By Amando Doronila

(First of two parts)

THE ASSAULT BY THE ADMINistration's storm troopers on the Iloilo provincial capitol on Wednesday in event Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas Sr. shocked the nation with a brutal show of force not seen since the warrantless arrests unleashed by President Macapagal-Arroyo when she declared a state of national emergency in February 2006.

ANALYSIS

The assault triggered a wave of national revulsion down to the grass roots, claimed by the administration as the foundations of its electoral constituency.

It would be a fatuity to discount the attack as merely a local episode whose repercussions should be confined to Iloilo.

The regime should beware of the fallout. It has provoked outrage across the country, and handed the opposition a powerful galvanizing issue against the administration ahead of the midterm elections.

The issue raised by the raid and the dismissal orders flagged the message that the administration is abusive, dangerous and cannot be trusted with restraint in the exercise of the state's police powers and with ensuring clean and fair elections in May.

LOILO A4

A1
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2007

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

6 Filipino seamen abducted in Nigeria

By Niñez Olano

SIX FILIPINO SEAMEN AND A NIGERIAN WERE kidnapped Saturday by an armed militant group in Nigeria's restive southern oil-producing region, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) confirmed early last night.

"The Filipinos are not oil workers in Nigeria but crew members of a ship passing through the area," Interior Undersec. Jr., DFA undersecretary for migrant workers' affairs, said in a phone interview.

The identities of the Filipino seamen were not disclosed.

"Six Filipinos and one local staffer were seized," a private security assistance told AFP.

"The vessel is still being held with six Filipinos in it. We understand they are OK. Orano Gov. James Boat is already intervening on the matter," a spokesperson for the Delta State government, Onome Shoddy, said.

"There were 14 crew members on board but only six were taken," Shoddy said.

He said the incident happened on Saturday morning at Okpoitobo and that the vessel was a "cargo ship operated by the Ikot Linn Company."

Philippine Ambassador to Abuja, Montenegro Unpa, has already dispatched embassy staff members to Warri, which is 160 km from the capital, to coordinate with Niger Delta State authorities for the immediate release of the Filipinos.

Ships entering Delta State are often harassed by pirates from local communities who demand protection money.

The Filipino seamen were kidnapped by members of the Movement of the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) as their ship made its way to the oil port of Warri, Delta State's capital, said Ed Mabaya, acting DFA spokesperson.

"The Filipino nationals are unharmed," said Mabaya.

"The group is demanding the release of a prisoner being held by the Nigerian federal government. We have no word as to which demands except for the release of this prisoner," Mabaya said.

Mabaya said information gathered by the Philippine Embassy in Abuja revealed that the cargo ship's owner was based in the British Isles.

"We have asked our embassy in Abu Dhabi to help us get in touch with the ship owners and the DFA is now in the process of getting in touch with the Filipinos' local manning agency here in the Philippines," Mabaya said.

Last year, at least three Filipino oil workers were held hostage in two separate incidents in the Niger Delta, a region notorious for gangs which is home to all of Nigeria's oil resources.

MEND was behind the kidnapping of one of them.

While the Filipinos were released unharmed, they were victims of shakedowns and traumatized by the experience.

Nearly 100 foreign hostages, mostly oil workers that help keep the crude flowing in Africa's largest petroleum producer, have been seized in an upsurge of violence that has slimmed nearly a quarter off Nigeria's usual production.

Most of the foreign oil workers kidnapped were later released, usually after ransom was paid.

However, one Briton and one Nigerian were in the custody of militants since Nigerian security forces once tried to liberate the hostages from their captors.

On Thursday, militants released five Chinese hostages and one Indian who had been seized in separate attacks. Two Indians and one Lebanese are still in militant captivity. WITH AP REPORTS

GMA draws some heckling at concert

AN OBSTINCTIVE CHORUS rang out as President Macapagal-Arroyo was about to make her way out of a pop opera concert Saturday night.

The President was heckled by some people in the mostly elite crowd who attended the "El Shaw" concert held at the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City the other night.

The heckling came after organizers of the show asked the audience to remain in their seats while President Arroyo was about to depart from the auditorium, according to a member of the audience who witnessed the incident.

The witness described the heckling as "steadfast" and that it came from some people seated in the upper house of the auditorium.

"It was not loud," said the witness, who acknowledged though that Ms Arroyo, who was seated up front, very likely heard it anyway.

She said she did not know why the President was heckled but noted that it came after the organizers asked everyone to remain in their seats because Ms Arroyo was leaving the premises.

But the witness said many people thought the heckling was due to the late arrival of the President at the concert held by El Shaw, a group of Filipinos singers who entertained the crowd with their pop opera songs, mostly in Italian.

The concert started at around 8:30 p.m. and ended at about 10 p.m. Christine O. Avendaño

Ex-gov's son dies

CITY OF MALOLOS — The son of former Bulacan Gov. Roberto Pagdanganan, currently Philippine International Trading Corp. chair and president, died yesterday at St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City from injuries sustained in a vehicular accident.

Supt. Manuel Lukban, city police chief, said Emmanuel Pagdanganan, 25, was driving his Nissan pickup at 3 a.m. on the Macleshaw High-way here when he hit a tricycle and his vehicle rolled over and skidded into an electric post. Christine O. Avendaño

I have no pending cases, says Chavit

ILOCOS SUR GOV. LUIS "CHAVIT" Singson yesterday insisted there were no longer any pending cases against him in the Office of the Ombudsman.

"As far as I know, I have no pending cases. All cases filed against me by my political enemies have been dismissed," Singson said.

Singson expressed surprise over reports of the alleged cases against him, explained by lawyer Estelita Cordero of the Inter-Baron Bar Alliance Foundation (Ibaf), whom he accused of blackmail.

According to Singson, Cordero was "making noise" because he refused to give her money for her silence. "She asked for an appointment with me and then she was asking for a million pesos," Chavit claimed.

He recalled that Cordero was his opponent in the gubernatorial election and she didn't even get 10 percent of the total vote.

"I could see through her attempt to blackmail me because she was desperate in need of money. I refused to give in to her demand for a million pesos, so now she is trying other tactics," he said.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio had said that the Ombudsman had in its dockets at least nine criminal and administrative complaints against Singson.

These included two administrative cases for graft and a criminal complaint for plunder, Villa-Ignacio said in a letter to Sen. Franklin Drilon in December, a copy of which was forwarded to the Inquirer by Cordero.

Erap impeach prosecutors hit Defensor plan

THE PRIVATE PROSECUTORS IN the impeachment trial of deposed President Joseph Estrada have expressed alarm over the revival of a proposal for his temporary liberty, calling it a "political deal in disguise."

"We condemn any effort to use the Estrada plunder case, the issues on temporary liberty, reorganization, or any of its incidents as leverage for any political negotiation, personal benefit, gratification or accommodation," the prosecutors said in a statement.

Last week, Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor announced that he was running for senator and that the temporary freedom of Estrada would be part of his campaign platform. This, he said, was his bid to cry and draw a human unity ticket.

Prosecutors Jesus V. Santiago, Atty. Henry R. Peralta, Christian Robert Lim and John Jerico L. Baltazar Jr. issued a statement protesting the Defensor proposal.

Those were the same lawyers who walked out during the 2001 impeachment trial when pro-Estrada senators voted not to open the second envelope that allegedly contained the "four-to-fourth" account.

The Estrada plunder case is against Gma any one person, it is more than any one lawyer; it is a matter for the people. Just retribution, should Estrada be found guilty belongs to the people—to the state as an aggrieved victim. Merely like "reconciliation" and "peace" are again peddled as if the former president's overthrow never is anything but just, lawful and equitable," the statement said.

"The Estrada plunder case is not a commodity to be bartered or bargained with; anyone in the political realm or personal comfort. The Estrada plunder case is a judicial matter... Thus, it is not for the administration or the opposition, or any politician to use, or give the appearance of using the issue as a bargaining chip or a mechanism for either attracting votes or for continued threats or coercion... Personal or political benefit or advantage cannot be gained under the guise of reconciliation," the statement added.

Davide app't to UN legal, says Palace

AS CONGRESS FAILURES TO RESIGN today, Malacañang continues to make the appointment of retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide as the country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations still not need prior confirmation by the Commission on Appointment, which is composed of members of the legislature.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said President Macapagal-Arroyo could make appointments when Congress was out.

"Whenever Congress is not in session, the Chief Executive may issue an ad interim appointment and the appointee can immediately assume office," Bunye said.

President Arroyo in Cebu last week swore in Davide, whose she had appointed last year to replace outgoing ambassador to the UN Lauro Baja.

But the presidential move drew strong protest from some senators who insisted that Davide should have first been confirmed by the CA before he would assume the diplomatic post.

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada even said he would ask the UN to reject Davide's appointment, but Palace officials said they doubted UN officials would intervene in the matter.

They also cited legal jurisprudence, such Bunye reiterating yesterday that the Palace move was backed by the Supreme Court decision in the Bengzon-Mugtay case. Christine O. Avendaño and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

Tillers, survivors recall 20-yr-old Mendiola massacre

By DJ Yap

[illegible] marker remembering a dark moment in history. The Mendiola massacre.

Two decades after 13 protesting farmers were gunned down near the gates of Malacañang, their friends and loved ones rallied once more in their memory and proclaimed their fervor in the struggle for genuine land reform.

"They were farmers, all of them," said Portia Feneral, 42, the widow of Roberto Feneral, one of those who were killed on Jan. 22, 1987, when state forces opened fire at thousands of peasants who had protested in Mendiola.

But along with admonitions for the farmers' heroism were primitive calls for justice. "To this day, no one has been punished for my husband's death. There is still no justice," he said said.

Yesterday, she joined 50 other members of Kilusang Bayan 22 and Bayanang Magkakaisang Pilipinas for a solemn ceremony to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Mendiola massacre.

"I pray that one day justice will be served and my husband will finally be at peace," she told the reporter.

The group unveiled a black granite marker measuring 60 by 60 centimeters honoring the 13 farmers who were slain during the infamous episode under then President Corazon Aquino's dwindling administration.

On the preceding June Unionsbil street were inscribed the words in Filipino and translated here: "On this bridge of Mendiola on Jan. 22, 1987, occurred the Mendiola Massacre, where 13 martyrs gave up their lives for true land reform."

The 13 names were on the marker along with the words, "Ngayon pa ay tayong kabataan pero at isang magkakasi at mamamayang Pilipino ay may hamon ng pagsisikap para sa kinabukasan ng ating mga kapwa Pilipino" (Today we are young but as citizens and Filipino people).

"We are here to remember the supreme sacrifice our brothers had offered in the struggle for genuine land reform," said Danilo Ramos, secretary general of SMP.

"Twenty long years have already passed but justice has still been served. The criminals who ordered the government forces to fire at our unarmed rally have not been punished," Ramos said in a statement.

Correction

IN THE ARTICLE, "Los Aguinaldo, Mr. Cash of SP are...is dead, '73," it was stated that Aguinaldo was buried at Arlington Memorial Park. He was not, his remains were interred at Loyola Memorial Park in Parañaque City. Aguinaldo's relation from the house he was living in reversed between 1989 and 1990. He did not only lose his art works during the eviction process but also the notes of his books and his appliances.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors or writing to the Public Affairs Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th floor, Media Center, corner Ahorro and Sgt. Esguerra Avenues, Quezon City, fax No. 897-8710, e-mail address: inq@inq.com.ph or by post to: 4137 Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th floor, Media Center, corner Ahorro and Sgt. Esguerra Avenues, Quezon City. The phone number is 897-8000 Local 382.

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Gov't to focus on 6 priority projects worth ₱60B

projects as follows:

- Expansion of the passenger terminal at the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Clark, Pampanga.
- Extension of the first 2 segments from Lipa to Batangas City.
- Construction of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway.
- Modernization of the Subic Container Port with the construction of two terminals.
- Rehabilitation of Iloilo.

Tiap said the projects were in line with President Macapagal-Arroyo's State of the Nation Address last July, which committed a massive investments program to unclog economic growth and spread prosperity nationwide through the "major region" development strategy.

Infrastructure train

At an infrastructure forum titled "Catching the Infrastructure Train," Tiap said the government was undertaking an appraisal of the completed work on Terminal 3 of Naia, which would serve as the basis for "just compensation" to Philippine International Air Terminals Corp. (Piatco), the Canadian-Filipino consortium that built the terminal.

Mr. Macapagal revealed that the contract in 2002 because certain terms were illegally renegotiated by key predecessor, ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Terminal 3 has been mothballed since then and has been the subject of legal battles between the government and the consortium.

Piatco filed a notice for arbitration with a tribunal in Singapore after the contract was revoked, demanding $560 million in compensation.

The German-based Aragon AG, which has a 30-percent stake in Piatco, is pursuing a separate arbitration process in Washington and is seeking $463 million.

The project, including a 13-km runway, is 58 percent complete. It is expected to be operational in March 2007, according to Tiap.

He said the expansion of the passenger terminal expansion of the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport, a hub for low-cost international carriers, will be completed by the end of December. The project is worth about ₱5.05 billion.

Tiap said the procurement-related works for the airport expansion was going on. The Terminal Radar Approach Control is installed and will be operational by April.

Clark Development Corp. will fund the construction.

The Star 2 project involves the construction of a 18.74-kilometer road from Lipa to Batangas City and the operation and maintenance of the 41.4-km stretch, including the section constructed by the Department of Public Works and Highways from Batangas to Lipa City.

The road construction, which will be completed by December, will cost ₱5.3 billion. The amount includes the ₱3 billion for right of way.

The Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway project will build, operate and maintain a 93.75-km highway. Construction is scheduled for April-November, with the Bases Conversion Development Authority as the implementing agency. The project is estimated to cost ₱25 billion.

Subic Container Port

The Subic Bay Port Development Project calls for the modernization of the Subic Container Port, it involves the construction of two container terminals, installation of gantry cranes for each berth, building of access roads, rehabilitation of wharves, and procurement of navigational aids.

The construction of the container terminals is scheduled to be finished by the middle of next month, according to Tiap.

The last project is the rehabilitation of Iloilo, the main highway in Metro Manila.

The rehabilitation includes the construction of footbridges, loading and unloading bays, and improvement of sidewalks and roadside. The project cost is not yet known.

The three were jointly conducted by First Metro Investment Corp. and the University of Asia and the Pacific.

Ehem: Avoid asking ...

dilapidated public school. Road repair work for a low-income community.

For a change, never ask for any of these favors from any candidate running in the May 14 national and local elections, a Church anti-corruption advocacy group called "Ehem" urged the public yesterday.

The group was remembering its "Walang Kibig" (Nobody Asks) campaign for the coming elections, hoping to help change the culture of corruption in government beginning with the "culture of vote-buying" many different favors from politicians.

"Let us reclaim our dignity," reads the campaign poster of the group initiated by the Jesuits of the Ateneo de Davao four years ago.

Ronnie Simmundo, the group's national coordinator, said it was using the "Walang Kibig" campaign following its relative success in the 2004 elections.

"Many people got curious about the program when we first introduced it in 2004," Simmundo told the Inquirer yesterday. "We felt many are really concerned about the elections and they were in our country and they want to change it."

For the voter, he said an important first step was to refrain from seeking any favor from candidates, who, in turn, were cautiously keen on getting someone's precious ballot.

No reason to steal

Ehem's rationale is quite simple: With voters not squeezing anything out of politicians, there should be no reason for them to steal from the public surface in once they won.

"When the occupation is stolen from politicians' minds, we should also not steal. They will be getting the money and the chances that they'll get themselves paid using public funds the moment they assume public office," Simmundo explained.

The Ehem campaign is straightforward, its posters listing opposite-scenarios where politicians are unworthy voices for certain favors.

In parishes, for instance, it's an unwritten rule that priests go to politicians whenever they need the altar repainted or to purchase church items like candles, according to the group.

In communities, a familiar sight involves politicians sponsoring town fiestas and basketball tournaments. Some neighborhood associations go to the extent of soliciting funds from politicians for a new multipurpose hall or sanitary dike, the group noted.

For schools, guns and walls are a common advertisement for election politicians, it said.

"This is not the time for any of these," according to them.

10 commandments

But what if favors were given by politicians themselves?

"It's the same thing," Simmundo said. "The moment we accept their favor, it will again start off this culture of corruption that we are trying to change."

The Ehem program was introduced as an anti-Church-based election advocacy project by the Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP) and the Philippine Bible Society (PBS).

The PBS'20 earlier came up with its own election education campaign titled "Bible Voters' Academy." The program included a set of criteria in choosing candidates titled "10 Commandments for Responsible Voting."

The PBS, an umbrella organization of Catholic and Christian leaders, also launched a related set of guidelines based on the Scripture.

Iloilo raid shows GMA admin fascistic

To top page A1

A potentially disastrous backlash from voters is looming on the horizon. The administration cannot ignore the gathering storm over the raid. The issue has the potential to fuel widespread anger, especially in the provinces, whose officials are directly involved in the purge.

It is not a Metro Manila issue alone. It is an issue that can catch fire if the opposition knows how to exploit it to break the administration's control of Congress and to shift the balance of power in the legislature.

Repressive character

The storming of the capitol highlighted the excessive use of force in the attempt to evict Tupas from office, after he had refused to bow to the arbitrary dismissal order of the Ombudsman while he was seeking relief from the order with the Court of Appeals.

The assault also confirmed the underlying repressive and hasty, in character of the Arroyo regime.

It underscored the issues of presidential abuse of executive powers, the ugly face of which surfaced during the national emergency proclamation last February and when the President, with the aid of her allies in the House of Representatives, crushed the impeachment complaints last year.

With an overwhelming majority in the House, presidentialists/administration legislators also voted to ram through a proposal to change the Constitution to ensure Ms Arroyo's stay in office until the end of her term of office in 2010. The House backed off from its attempt to convene a constituent assembly only after Catholic bishops and other sectors threatened to stage nationwide rallies against the move.

Barrage to cripple opposition

The assault has fueled fears that the administration has gone on a campaign to cripple any semblance of opposition in the country in the May elections.

The suspension and dismissal of local executives are seen as political purges. In an unaccustomed display of overzealousness, the Ombudsman is pressuring the sectors as part of the campaign to clean up the smoking mine of local officials to make it appear that the administration is determined to end the government of graft.

Tupas tops the list of officials ordered dismissed or suspended from office during the past six months. Based on Inquirer Research's files, the list contains up to 63 names, including appointed officials.

They are being dismissed or suspended for offenses ranging from grave misconduct, dishonesty, corruption, conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service, graft, and abuse of authority.

Ombudsman as hit man

The list looks like a political purge, in which the Ombudsman is supposedly being used as the hit man, because it singles out high-profile local politicians who are associated with the opposition and who are considered more popular than candidates seen as allies of the President.

Besides Tupas, an ally of Sen. Franklin Drilon in the LDoyal Multy wing that withdrew support from Ms Arroyo in July 2005, the list targets two of Tupas' provincial board members; Pototy City Mayor Nicanor Tiruntad, Vice Mayor Antonio Lallen and eight councilors; Gov. Armando Sanchez of Batangas and five other provincial officials, and Mayor Antonio Raquiral of Jaen, Nueva Ecija.

Targeted is the opponent of modernizer Rep. Rodolfo Antonio, a presidential ally in the House, in the Nueva Ecija congressional race.

Gov. Erlinda Mallari of Cavite and Mayor Jejomar Binay of Makati, a leader of the United Opposition, who has made his city the center of opposition protest activities in Metropolitan, were earlier ordered suspended by the Ombudsman. Mallari and Binay obtained restraining orders from the Court of appeals.

Ominous sign

Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez on Jan. 11 directed Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno to "immediately implement" all the dismissal and suspension orders she had issued.

On Jan. 16, Puno gave Tupas, Esquivel and Mendiola 48 hours to vacate their posts.

The assault on the Iloilo capitol is an ominous sign of things to come for the regime because it has raised an issue that has created wide resonance among local officials.

The excessive use of force in Iloilo provoked condemnation from the Manila Mayors' League, some senators and the Independent Commission on Human Rights.

Local executives have denounced the action that are clearly part of the "dirty tricks" of the administration aimed at crippling the opposition in its campaign to retain its stranglehold on the House of Representatives and provincial and municipal offices.

Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez said she was shocked to see policemen with assault rifles smashing the locks of the capitol gates and breaking glass doors in their effort to oust Tupas.

Gutierrez said the actions of the police were inconsistent with "the picture we are trying to portray of a peaceful country of law-abiding citizens."

"When you point a gun at somebody, it is just to poke him on the head? Their posture appeared they were ready to shoot," she said.

Part 2 will appear in the Analysis column on Wednesday.

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Temporary water interruption in Mandaluyong and Taguig needed to upgrade facilities

Manila Water will be conducting an upgrade of its distribution lines to improve water distribution in the East Zone. We regret that we have to temporarily interrupt water supply in portions of Mandaluyong and Taguig starting 10:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 23, 2007, up to 6:00 a.m., Wednesday, January 24. The first activity will involve the flushing of a large pipeline along A. Bonifacio in Mandaluyong. Affected areas are Ilgos, Poblacion, Hagdang Bato Itaas, Hagdang Bato Libis, Buting, Bagong Silang, Harapin ang Bukas and Pagasa.

Meanwhile, the second interruption will be due to the installation of new valves along C-5 in Taguig. The following areas will be affected: Barangays Rizal, Pembo, BCDA, Diego Silang and Palar.

Manila Water Company advises all residents of the said areas to store enough water prior to the scheduled interruptions to avoid inconvenience.

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Inspection to determine where Honasan will be held

By Tarra Quismundo

BUT IS IT FIT FOR CUSTODY?

Court personnel will facilitate an ocular inspection where they inspect the police cars for the Monday visit that Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan will be held since his arrest in November.

Judge Oscar Pimentel and the staff of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 148 will go to Sen. Bonn to check Honasan's place of detention, a visit Pimentel deemed necessary for the court to decide whether or not to grant the Senator-rebel-coup-plotter's request to be transferred to the Makati City Jail (MCJ).

Pimentel had checked out the MCJ on Jan. 19 and found it "orderly and decent" and its personnel "OK," but withheld further assessment until he had decided on whether he would grant Honasan's plea to be detained there instead of at Camp Bonifacio.

Honasan's lawyer, Daniel Gutierrez, said that being at the Sin Kwan detention facility was like being in a cage, although it had better amenities than the MCJ, which is supervised by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology and is a holding facility for crime suspects being tried.

"But Sin Gwangs is a lot better in terms of physical comfort; the [JAG] filed being in a gilded cage where he can't talk to anybody," Gutierrez said in an interview.

The lawyer said Honasan was being held in a bungalow that could be reached only after passing through several gates and security checks. Usually, he said, it took 20 minutes or an hour to get to Honasan to visit the former senator.

Honasan, detained on charges of coup d'etat for his alleged role in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny, was being guarded inside and outside the bungalow. His roommates are police guards.

"The SOMF is there to take custody of detention prisoners. The problem with the CIDG [Criminal Investigation and Detection Group of the Philippine National Police] and the police detaining him is that they are the ones who had filed the charges against him. It's like being held in your neighbor's house who has filed a case against you," Gutierrez said.

The coup d'etat case filed against Honasan in February 2006 was based on a complaint filed by the police. Some 31 junior military officers involved in the rice-hoarding scam busted in mid-2004 for the same case filed separately in Pimentel's sala.

Pimentel is also expected to resolve, within the month, Honasan's request to leave his detention quarters to personally file his motion to demolish or for interior at the Commission on Elections main office in Intramuros, Manila.

State prosecutors opposed the move, saying Honasan was a "flight risk."

Gutierrez said the former senator had no "flight plan" as he could barely walk due to a leg injury. Besides, he would want to be visible to help boost his chances of returning to the legislature.

Gov't officials back GCC's bid to be SC justice

HEADS OF STATE FIRMS AND LOCAL GOVernment leaders have thrown their support behind the appointment of Government Corporate Counsel (GCC) Agnes SST De Gesmundo as an associate justice of the Supreme Court.

"De Gesmundo is supremely qualified and holds the ideals that would make her an esteemed member of the bench," said Quezonian president and CEO Nilson C. Bautista. "She has consistently shown her probity, competence and impartiality as the Government Corporate Counsel."

De Gesmundo is on the shortlist of nominees for the associate justice seat left vacant by the resignation in Justice Reynato Puno of Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban who retired last Dec. 7.

Dely Pino Philippines general manager Michael Christian U. Eala is endorsing De Gesmundo to the Judicial Bar Council, said the possessed qualities that recommended her appointment to the high court.

"Attorney De Gesmundo has been a competent partner in our continuing pursuit for strategic solutions to the governmental corporate sector to ensure good governance. Her efforts also benefitted in the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel have redounded to the benefit of its hundreds of client government-owned and controlled corporations," Eala said.

Local government executives also joined a number of support for De Gesmundo.

The League of Cities of the Philippines said De Gesmundo "is committed to good governance and to the interests and welfare of the poor and the needy through proper representation in local government units."

The League of Municipalities of the Philippines said De Gesmundo "is an advocate of people empowerment, local autonomy, women's and children's rights and is a staunch supporter of legislative reforms."

De Gesmundo was appointed GCC in September 2004. She had served as undersecretary for legal and legislative affairs at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources where she led the investigation into the Oakwood mutiny of 2003.

She had also headed the anti-illegal drugs campaign as its national action officer.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, January 22, 2007
3rd Week in Ordinary Time
St. Vincent

1st Reading: Heb 9:15, 24-28
Gospel: Mark 3:22-30

The teachers of the Law who had come from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul, the chief of the demons helps him to drive out demons."

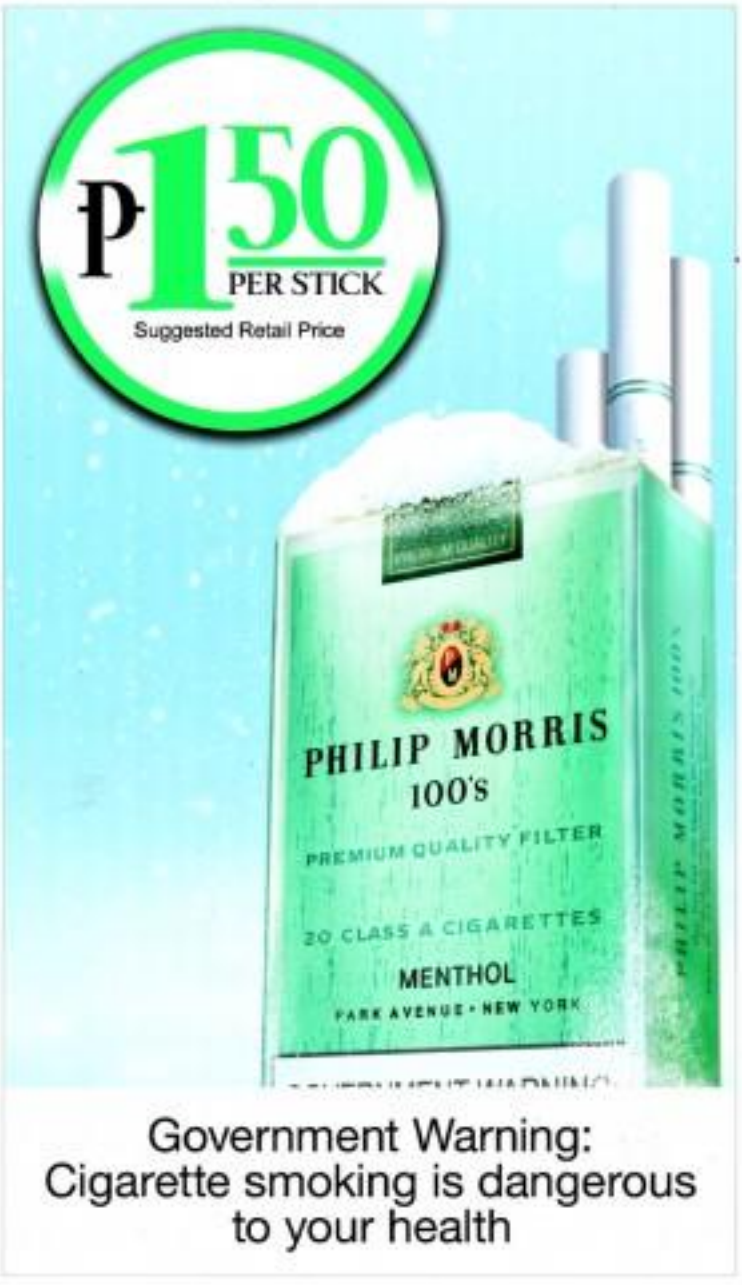
Jesus called them to him and began speaking to them by means of stories or parables. "How can Satan drive out Satan? If a nation is divided by civil war, that nation cannot stand. If a family is also split into groups, that family will not survive. In the same way, if Satan has turned against himself and is divided, he will not survive; he is finished. No one can break into the house of the strong man to steal his possessions unless he first ties up the strong one. Then indeed, he can plunder his house.

"Truly, I say to you, every sin will be forgiven humankind, even insults to God, however numerous. But whoever slanders the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven: the sin is the guilt of his sin forever."

This was their way when they said, "He has an evil spirit in him."

Commentary

Jesus is challenged by those who reject his words and actions, and the people accuse him of being possessed by Beelzebul, a name for Satan (the Murderer). But Jesus is clear about who he is and what he is doing: He is the strong man and his house is protected—no one enters who is not welcomed and blessed. Jesus embraces those who have sinned and are asking for forgiveness. He holds himself close who do evil, injustice, violence, sin, and reassures their presence and others. Their sin was to refuse to believe in forgiveness and the presence of God among them—in the Spirit and Word of Jesus. Is that our sin too? To see Him, and seek to resist and resist evil, by forgiving and live in the house of the strong man Jesus?



Encounters result in 6 suspected NPAs, one soldier killed in Luzon

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By Dolly T. Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—SIX SUSPECTED COMMUNIST insurgents and one Army soldier were killed over the past three days in a series of encounters in the Southern Tagalog and Bicol regions that also uncovered caches of explosives and extortion letters intended to be used against politicians running in campaigns in the congressional and local elections in May, military spokespersons reported yesterday.

One soldier's death was also reported wounded in the gun battles between government troops and New People's Army guerrillas in the hilltop of Bonacbonac town in the Bondoc Peninsula and Pilar town, north of Legazpi City on Saturday, and in remote barangays of Tanay in Quezon province on Thursday.

Lt. Col. Rodolfo Pamplico of the military's Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Vicar said they recovered several caches of explosives and ammunition from the rebels in the encounters, including a Garand rifle that was also identified with rebel and one soldier dead. Another soldier was wounded.

The names of the dead and wounded members of the 19th Infantry Battalion, which encountered the Bondoc Peninsula rebels, were being withheld pending notification of their respective families.

Further south in Legazpi City, soldiers reported that they overran a communist camp in the outskirts of Pilar town before dawn on Saturday, killing five rebels. A military statement claimed five dead guerrillas were seen being dragged away by their comrades as they fled to the hills.

Nine soldiers were reported wounded in the encounters, which took place in the town of Cherry mines, large of ammunition extortion used in making explosives, hundreds of rounds of ammunition, food ration, iron, nearby communities, as well as extortion letters intended for politicians.

Most explosives were recovered last Thursday during a raid on a rebel hide-out barangay town's interior Pilar town.

Troops said the earlier assumed of six snipers armed rifles, three M16 Armalites/shotguns, one detonating cord and one firing mechanism.

Lt. Col. Alexander Yan, Solcom chief, said the NPAs belonged to the Bondoc Peninsula rebel Guerrilla Front 85, and are "roaming at large" after three of its leaders were killed in the clash.

Solcom reported that a total of 171 suspected communist rebels in the Southern Tagalog and Bicol regions had been "neutralized"—50 NPA rebels killed, 76 captured and 45 surrendered to the military.

On the rebel hand, the military suffered 39 casualties and another 60 troopers wounded in 111 anti-insurgency operations last year.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has renewed her instructions to defeat the communist insurgency by 2010, when her term expires.

With AFP reports

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Likewise, the GSIS is renewing its call pensioners who still don't have eCards to go to their servicing GSIS office to prevent disruption in their monthly pensions.

Thank you.

Original Signed:
ENRIQUETA P. DIGANCS
Executive Vice President
Operations Sector

Cops charge human rights groups padding dead list

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE over political killings in the Philippines, Cordillera region police charged human rights groups with padding their list with fictitious names.

Senior Supt. Joseph Arbad, Cordillera police spokesperson, said they had reviewed the list of 20 murder cases submitted by the Cordillera Human Rights Alliance and found that 11 people "do not exist."

In a press statement from Camp Dangwa, police said "exhaustive verification (has) confirmed that no Intelmatel named Gold Saber, Ben Ulbog, Abie Bernabe, Lolita Gaida, Christopher Grafe Bercabe Baagwey, Mildred Zelle, Mashmae Mendebengan, Alene Embac, Gobies Lawagayen and Bernabe Baagwey were listed in the local registries or with the Intelmatel Statistic Office. Police investigators concluded that these individuals are still alive and that some (murder reports) did not actually happen."

But the Cordillera Human Rights Alliance was standing by its list.

Beverly Longid, chair of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance, said the murders involved "indigenous Filipinos with little or scientific record."

"Designing (these cases) from [active police files] because they have no birth certificates or marriage certificates is sloppy police work," she said, adding that "many of these murders had been traced to military operations."

Camp Dangwa did acknowledge some of the killings.

Police said soldiers ambush Abraham Cimmang, a farmer from Mountain Province, for a supposed guerrilla and shot him in August 2006. The military settled the case out of court.

Police records also included the accidental shooting of 10-year-old Jhunter Bilwa Agnayog by policemen chasing gunmen involved in a payroll heist of a mining company in Mankayan, Benguet.

Police also recorded the murder of Kalinga farmer Victor Dana, a by soldiers from the 77th Infantry Battalion in September 2005. The case is still being headed by a local court.

Meanwhile, in San Fernando City, a militant human organization said it had uncovered a military briefing paper that confirmed the government's plan to discredit some legitimate party-list groups by branding them as communist fronts.

Emilio Ilasan, secretary general of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, said a document titled, "Guiding four Decades of Communist Rebellion: 10th Government's Counter-insurgency Threats," did not name the party-list groups but alluded to them when it cited "rebellion that put liberal democratic party-list leaders in cahoots with the Maoist group to an easier plan."

Ilasan said the KMP obtained a copy of the document, dated May 5, 2006, from "a disgruntled AFP officer."

But Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino, Army chief, said he had not seen or heard of such a document. "I don't think it is genuine." With reports from Sandra Ordiz, Inquirer Central Luzon

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Hillary makes US presidential race most exciting in history

Campaign 08 | With the entry of Clinton and Obama, the field of southward Democratic hopefuls expanded to seven, still 12 short the aftermath of the first crucial state-based primary elections that will decide the Democratic and Republican party nominees who will battle for the White House in November 2008.

Front-runner

Clinton, 59, a senator from New York and wife of former President Bill Clinton, ended years of speculation over her political ambitions with her announcement.

"The front-runner has just stepped on the stage," Rushing, said's senior political analyst Charlie Cook said.

"This is the first woman in our history who will be taken seriously by everyone," political scientist Barbara Mandell of Rutgers University added.

But while polls showed Clinton the odds-on favorite to capture the Democratic nomination next year, her continuing ability to divide voters means that the race was still wide open,—with Obama, former Senator John Edwards and others yet to commit to the race angling to demonstrate they have a better chance to defeat the Republican challenger.

In a Washington Post-ABC News poll of voters surveyed between December 14 and January 10, Clinton outpaced Obama 41 percent to 17 in the contest for the Democratic nomination.

Likewise, a Gallup poll taken a week ago put Clinton ahead with a 25-percent backing from Democratic voters, compared with Obama with 18 percent and Edwards at 13 percent.

But questions remain over whether Clinton, whose eight years as a presidential first lady helped her husband fill a large swath of U.S. voters' old, can defeat any politician the Republicans choose to fight for the White House.

Big weakness

A CBS News poll at the beginning of January pointed to a big weakness by Clinton—46 percent of all voters, and a whopping 78 percent of Republicans, have decidedly unfavorable feelings toward Clinton, suggesting that, in a country closely divided between the two parties, she might not have the ability to woo the Republican necessary for a decisive victory in 2008.

Indeed, a Newsweek poll released on Saturday suggested that Edwards, the vice presidential running-mate of John Kerry in the 2004 campaign, may be her strongest opponent from the Democrats' base for.

Adding voters their preferences in certain match-ups, Newsweek reported that Clinton, if she runs against Republican Sen. John McCain, would barely edge him ahead, 48 percent to 47 percent.

In an Obama-versus-McCain scenario, the Democrat eyeted 46 percent against McCain's 44 percent. But Edwards trumped Rudy Giuliani 49 percent versus 43 percent.

Edwards's poll also showed lead-ing Republican contender Rudy Giuliani, a former New York mayor, Clinton came out a percentage point behind and Obama was two points behind. But Edwards held a 51-43 percent lead over Giuliani.

Obama

That did not mean Obama should be ruled out. He only burst on the national scene in 2004, but since then, with inspirational oratory and his easy smile, has catapulted an image as a pivotal cross-cultural figure and the voice of a newer generation.

"He does fit America's image of itself," political scientist Larry Sabato said. "He's young, charismatic, optimistic, diverse—America is no longer going to be a white majority country by 2050."

No one is dismissing the possibility of someone else charging to the forefront either. AFP

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List of US politicians out to succeed Bush

WASHINGTON—FOLLOWING IS a list of US politicians who have officially declared or are widely expected to declare their intention to run for the White House. Some have taken the key step of forming "exploratory committees" that allows them to begin raising funds for the race.

The Democratic and Republican candidates are the current Republican President George W. Bush, who after two four-year terms cannot seek reelection, will be decided in state primary and caucus votes beginning next January.

Republicans

The following Republicans have either officially declared their intention to run or formed exploratory committees.

• Arizona Sen. John McCain, 70, a Vietnam War hero who lost to Bush in the 2000 Republican primaries, has a reputation for independence and favors a US troop buildup in Iraq.

• Rudolph Giuliani, 62, is a former New York City mayor who enjoys strong support in opinion polls, in part for guiding New York's response to the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks on the World Trade Center.

• Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, 59, is credited with rescuing the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, Utah, from scandal and mismanagement. The Boston businessman is a devout Mormon.

• Former Sen. Sam Brownback, 50, is a devout Roman Catholic who enjoys strong support from religious conservatives.

• Tommy Thompson, 65, is a former secretary of health and human services in the Bush administration.

Expected to join race

The following Republicans have not declared their candidacy but are widely expected to be considering a bid:

• Nebraska Sen. Chuck Hagel, 60, is a moderate Republican and a vocal critic of the US handling of the war in Iraq.

• Newt Gingrich, 63, is a former speaker of the House of Representatives and a free-market liberal.

Democrats

The following Democrats have either officially declared their intentions to run or formed exploratory committees.

• New York Sen. Hillary Clinton, 59, is a strong favorite for the Democratic Party nomination. She has already surrounded herself with a team of experienced advisers, including her husband, former President Bill Clinton, and has begun a record of visits to key battleground states.

• Illinois Sen. Barack Obama, 45, is considered the first African-American to have a serious chance of winning the presidency. Charismatic and telegenic, he has begun a record of visits to key battleground states.

• John Edwards, 53, is a former senator and John Kerry's vice presidential running mate in the 2004 presidential election. Edwards is a populist trial lawyer who has morphed his rugged image to appeal to voters for party primary races, such as Iowa and South Carolina.

• Tom Vilsack, 56, is a former two-term governor of Iowa, where the first caucus in closely contested in the presidential race will be held in January 2008.

• Ohio Rep. Dennis Kucinich, 60, is a pacifist who promotes social issues and embodies the party's left wing. He was a Democratic contender in 2004 but garnered only minimal backing.

• Delaware Sen. Joseph Biden, 64, the powerful current chair of the Senate foreign relations committee, is an attorney and law professor who was first elected to the US Senate in 1972, where he now has 20 years old.

• Connecticut Sen. Chris Dodd, 62, a senior Democrat in the Senate, is an old hand in foreign affairs. He was first elected to Congress in 1974, serving for six years in the House of Representatives before being elected to the Senate in 1980.

Considering a run

The following Democrats have not declared their candidacy but are widely reported to be considering a run:

• New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, 59, is a former energy secretary in the Clinton administration and a former UN ambassador to the United Nations. He has also lent his negotiating expertise to talks with North Korea and efforts to resolve the Darfur conflict. If elected, he would be the first Hispanic US president.

• Wesley Clark, 62, a former supreme allied commander of NATO forces in Europe, could launch another campaign after his failed attempt in 2004.

• Al Gore, 58, Clinton's vice president, was defeated by Bush in the 2000 election. He flatly denied having any presidential aspirations after the success of "An Inconvenient Truth," the documentary on global warming, leaving open the possibility that he will join the race.

• Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry, 63, is a Vietnam War veteran who already has plenty of experience running for president, having lost the 2004 election to Bush. He has said he would announce his plans for the 2008 election. AFP

Get out of our faces, pay panels tell solons

By Lila B. Salamatin

[illegible] DOING OUR JOB.

This was the message five of the country's Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Boards gave to lawmakers urging them to listen to the board the job mandated to them by the law of setting workers' salaries.

The wage boards signed resolutions asking the legislators to reconsider their support for the P125-across-the-board daily salary increase recently passed by the House of Representatives, saying this would worsen the workers, some situation in their respective areas.

They said that under the law, they are tasked with setting the minimum wage as well as non-wage benefits like rolled from taxes and incentives, rice and health insurance contributions and living allowances.

The boards that issued resolutions were those in the Ilocos, Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan), Central Visayas, Northern Mindanao and Caraga (Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Surigao del Norte and del Sur) regions.

Labor Secretary Arturo Brion, who earlier said he would recommend that the President veto the bill, backed the wage boards, saying they know how much the workers should be receiving given their close dealings with employers and their employees.

A wage board is composed of representatives from the government, labor and business sectors.

"They know exactly what the area's needs in the regional level are, particularly the prevailing economic conditions in their respective areas," Brion said.

On the other hand, a militant Bayanihan group called on the Senate to pass its counterpart bill on the P125 pay increase, saying the politicized farmers dependent on their positions on the issue.

Senators are morally obliged to side with the workers and uphold the Senate approved by the House if they want to be relevant to majority of Filipinos, the Bayanihang Lakas ng Manggagawa ng Pilipinas Organizational said.

Earlier, Malacañang said it was hopeful Congress would approve the bill increasing the salaries of over one million more workers by 13 percent before the legislators go on recess at the end of February.

Mirant workers restive

LUCENA CITY—FOLlowing the sale of 65 mint Philippines to the consortium of Tokuo Electric Power Co. Inc. and Marubeni Corp., the more than 1,000 Filipino workers of the company have grown restive over their job security.

"We don't know what will happen to us now. The management of Mirant Philippines has kept on eroding all the issues surrounding the status of our employment," said a Mirant Pagbilao plant worker who asked not to be named for security reasons.

The employees said the former management enabled the scheduled dialogue last Friday at the Department of Labor and Employment.

"Only nine representatives showed up at the DOLE. The Mirant management did not attend. Here on, they justify the sentiments of the workers when they are evading us?" the worker said.

Mirant employs 1,000 Filipino workers of whom at least 400 are assigned to the Pagbilao power plant in Quezon province.

The workers lamented that President Macapagal-Arroyo had not lifted a finger on the deals in their plight. Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

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OPINION

Is there no one else?

EDITORIAL

THE MID-TERM ELECTIONS IN MAY PROVIDE the public with the opportunity to receive the President's report of legitimacy (or way or another). They also give the public the chance to pass its collective judgment, depending on how election issues will be framed, on related matters such as Charter change.

These make-or-break stakes, however, seem far removed from the current concerns of the opposition. We understand that, in politics, the highest of winning sometimes means platform and principle. But the opposition's emphasis on filling a Senate slate or the lifting of deposed President Joseph Estrada (an agitator, say, planning to win at least one-third of House seats outright) reflects on an especially unfortunate.

To appropriate the question Batasan pupuc Rep. Edcel do Reyes raised—to dramatic effect but without any discernible practical result—during the first impeachment case against President Macapagal-Arroyo: Is there no one else?

We ask: Is there no one else besides Estrada who has the political and financial capital to bankroll opposition unity?

We do not begrudge Estrada his quick-off-the-mark attempt to put together a single opposition Senate slate; he has all the right (and in the endless of his Tanay estate, where he is under house arrest, also all the time) to talk strategy.

But the high profile he has earned and the first-mover advantage he (now enjoys with to disguise the limits of his influence. In other words, the mastermind of a race-clinching one-liner indeed.

Yet, association with Estrada can help one get elected to the Senate—but only if one's namesake in Estrada text or Ejercito. His name has given both his wife and his first-born son the gift of a Senate seat, but who can seriously argue that, say, big-spending Assistant Majority Floor Leader popular Prof. Lito over their Senate positions to the Man in Tanay?

Recent history provides the opposition with an alternative: Consider, for instance, the example of the Convenor Group, which did the yeoman's work of forging opposition unity before the mid-term elections in 1986.

We ask: Is there no one else aside from former Sen. Ernesto Maceda who can chair a newsbriefing for the so-called united opposition?

Maceda, to belabor the obvious, is a man of great political experience. Unfortunately for him—and despite an apparent religious conversion that took place just before the 2004 elections—that experience is no longer seen as a source of advantage. For those old enough, Maceda personifies politics—as-usual, compromised in the court sense way that ex-Sen. John Osmeña has been compromised. He has jumped one too many political fences. For those who are voting for the first time, Maceda is perceived as a ghostly specter out of the past, an object of some curiosity but not a figure of authority.

Recent history provides the opposition with many young, fresh faces to choose from. Consider the icons of the two impeachment episodes; they were spotlight in the first and outmaneuvered in the second, but at least they seem to promise a future, instead of a mere return to the inglorious past.

We ask: Is there no one else who sees the wisdom in the late Fernando Poe Jr.'s admittedly simplistic approach to politics? Avoid being seen in the company of politicians. From the declaration of his candidacy until the start of the official campaign period (that is, when he could no longer avoid doing so), the image-conscious Poe studiously avoided any public contact with veteran politicians. (Behind the scenes, of course, it was an entirely different thing.)

On stage, even while he shared the spotlight with politician-guests, he seemed to cultivate some distance, indeed, the place of honor for his campaign rallies was reserved not for a political luminary but for another Filipino movie icon: Bobby Garcia. (Movie always spoke after Poe.

Perhaps Poe was responding to the public's unspoken need: No more politics, or at least no to politics-as-usual. In the three years since the last elections, that need can only have deepened. That approach can only work better

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Is SC sitting on election case in Legazpi?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE SUPREME COURT IS SUPPOSED TO BE the champion of justice.

Citizens who feel that they are being denied justice can run to it for relief. Supposed to be. But sometimes it is the Supreme Court itself that unwittingly lends itself to a denial of justice. Take this case.

Having won the election protest against Mayor Noel E. Rosal, Michael Imperial has been declared by the Commission on Elections—not Imperial Dictator—and so have—on the duly elected city mayor of Legazpi City. That was eight months ago. But until now he pental cannot assume his position because the Supreme Court is sitting on the case. Only five months are left of the term. Will the elected mayor be denied his due? Will the high court let the term expire before it hastily itself and hands down its decision on the case? Or will this be another case of those cowards de Jobcases where the winner is given a week or three days to sit as the elected official before the term expires? Where is justice there?

The election period for the May election ended last Jan. 14. All election cases in the Comelec are supposed to be finished by that time. But the Supreme Court takes its own sweet time. Election are made to the least of the rest of the world.

The Philippine justice system works in favor of election cheats. Never mind if they are caught cheating. The priority objective is to be proclaimed the elected official. Once the cheat is proclaimed, the cheater could then have a difficult, expensive and long, uphill battle.

The recount takes a very long, laborious process with lawyers arguing endlessly over minor things, the intent of the defense being to delay the case as long as possible.

Even if they cheat is eventually declared by the Comelec as the loser, he can appeal to the courts, which will then go through another long process to review the case.

During all this time, the cheat sits on the position he has stolen, collecting all the salaries, allowances and other emoluments that do not belong to him. And he performs official functions that he has no right of performing. His only consolation, sits outside, looking in and counting the long days and the money he has to spend to keep the election protest going. It is like waging a second expensive campaign—the first to win the election; the second to be able to sit on the seat he had won.

When the courts—supposedly—declare him the winner, what does he get? A few days to sit as mayor or congressman, and to collect the salaries both of the salary and allowances. And the cheat? He had already run laughing all the way to the bank with the money that did not right fully belong to him.

This process in the justice system encourages cheating.

I suggest that a law be passed to end this irregularity. When a preliminary investigation shows there is merit in an election protest, the emoluments for the position should be frozen. At the end of the case, they will be given to who is declared the winner. That should discourage cheats, as they will get little if they are found out, and that should enlarge the victims. Also, when the winner is given the emoluments that rightfully belong to them.

But back to the Rosal vs Imperial case. Here is a background:

Rosal was declared the elected mayor of Legazpi City on May 14, 2004, with 44,752 votes over Imperial's 33,747 votes.

On July 6, 2004, Imperial filed an election protest with the Comelec. The Comelec proceeded with the re-appreciation of ballots.

On Jan. 25, 2006, the Comelec's Second Division declared Imperial as the winning candidate and ordered Rosal to vacate the Office of the Mayor of Legazpi.

The case was elevated to the Comelec en banc which affirmed the decision of the Second Division on May 29, 2006. Rosal appealed to the Supreme Court. And there it dies.

It is difficult to understand why the tribunal is taking that long to decide on the case, which is urgent because the term of the mayor is about to expire. It could be due to plain oversight or laziness, or it could be deliberate.

No question of law is involved in the case and the Supreme Court is not a trier of facts. The resolution of the Comelec en banc shows that the contested ballots were examined and re-appreciated, and the findings and conclusions were given by the Comelec.

Rosal is asking the tribunal to weigh the evidence all over again and re-examine the facts and findings of the Comelec. No question of law is in fact involved.

The Supreme Court itself in Pamatian vs Comelec (389 SCRA 761) has held that:

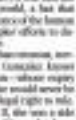
"The appreciation of the contested ballots and election documents involves a question of fact best left to the determination of the Comelec, a specialized agency tasked with the supervision of elections all over the country."

It has been a long established doctrine that findings of facts of administrative bodies charged with their special field of expertise, are afforded great weight by the courts ... and in this instance, the Comelec, which is the government agency most disturbed." (Ocampo vs Comelec, 325 SCRA 636)

Moreover, no grave abuse of discretion has been committed by the Comelec in issuing the questioned resolution declaring that Imperial won with a lead of 13,005 votes. Rosal's argument that there is a mistake somewhere of ballots could not have been tampered with does not correspond to the tradition present during elections. This is now the first time that the Comelec had nullified a substantial number of ballots on the basis of their having been written by the same person.

Six years and two days

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

TODAY IS NOT A RED-LETTER DATE IN THE calendar, but it is a red-letter date in the mind. Today, Jan. 22, 2007, Gloria Macapagal Arroyo will have been in Malacañang for six years and two days. She was sworn into office by Hilario Davide on Jan. 20, 2001.

The only one who has served longer than GMA since 1986 is Corazon Aquino. Cory was president from Feb. 25 1986 to end of May 1992, a total of six years and three months. Since you can safely bet your life and those of your children and children's children that GMA will not be bit by a thunderbolt of enlightenment and give up power willingly three months from now, by the end of April this year, Cory will have occupied Malacañang the longest since Ferdinand Marcos. Don't worry, I'll remind you of it this April. But for the nonce, today, Jan. 22, GMA has occupied Malacañang longer than any of the elected presidents of this country.

As I said last December, that is not to be highly. GMA will have been president of this country longer than any elected president of this country since 1986 without having been elected president of this country.

Cory herself wasn't. Or at least she's debatable whether she was the one elected or not. In any case, the snap elections were the device to lend legitimacy to that time, which ended three completely. The record would be broken only in 2004 when the incumbent would steal the votes wholesale. But quite apart from that, Cory's legitimacy did not come to the elections, it came to a far more direct and elemental expression of the sovereign will. That was People Power.

Throughout her term, Cory would never be bothered by unemployed—or near-unemployed—persons of being an illegitimate ruler. Other than those completely delusional military upstarts and one Reuter Emile who imagined themselves the true authors of Edsa, on the contrary Cory would have both the moral and legal right to be president. Morality she was the one who inspired, gave shape to and led the struggle that resulted in People Power. She was the heart of People Power, a fact the coup plotters could challenge only by arms and not by principle. Legally, well, it was more than that she was presidential president of this country at Oak Plaza following all the protocols of law; it was first she was recognized as by all the world, a fact that would be upheld by the Constitution of the land. No one, specifically by other people' efforts to displace People Power elsewhere.

If GMA's legitimacy is less than overseas, never in mind touched, only fatal (complete) lesser mind it. Throughout her term—whose expiry date lapsed long, long ago—she would never be seen as having the moral and legal right to rule, she was not a leader of Edsa II, she was a side effect of Edsa II.... one that would completely reverse its operative powers. Morally and, she were word would be anathema to her side. Legally, she would proclaim herself president while the country slept, only to be slapped in the face a year later by the same Constitution. Twice in a month would clap quite literally in self photos—deafeningly across the land. They were "faith" and "Cory."

Different folks, different strokes, different manners, different features. For those who think legitimacy is a small matter, one that should be superseded by more important ones, think again.

Because Cory was legitimate, she went about restoring the foundations of democracy, or at least the kind of democracy we paradoxically though quite accurately call "elite democracy." Though her rule was marred by inconsequential and luminous rightist rebellions, she gave the democratic institutions the space and nourishment they needed to assert themselves. And affirming in the end that it was those institutions—and not any savior, real or self-advertised—that assured that country of a future, she willingly gave up power in 1992.

Because GMA is like she has restored the foundations of dictatorship, the barbed wire lolled out across the country's now showing variety amid the caves of elections. What's the point of elections when, as in Marcos' time, the results will be contested by people who do not honor them as earned? Indeed, what's the point of elections when elected officials can be booted out later on some pretext or another? None is the handmaiden of illegitimacy, nowhere can it be more terrible of usurpation.

There's a deeper reason why she can't step down. The corruption during Cory's Ramos' and Erap's time merely means the theft of the nation's body. The corruption during Marcos' and GMA's time means the theft of the nation's soul. The latter is corruption in the deepest sense of the word—in the sense of things decaying and rotting. We are not just seeing the plunder of the nation's wealth, we are seeing the plunder of the nation's values. As in Marcos' time, we now live in a world where right is wrong and wrong is right, where evil is rewarded and good punished, where democracy is a curse and piracy a claim to the crown.

The story is told that when Cory went to Ramos' inauguration in June 1992, the moment of an ruling on the family-owned Toyota Corolla instead of the Mercedes-Benz the Marcoses flew and stepping on and in interviews notwithstanding that it was a source nightmare, to show the world that she was now just Citizen Cory. I don't know about you, but I can't see that the official Mercedes-Benz of the wife of the ruling GMA will be built to part with in June 2010. We've been presidential longer than any other presidents of this country since 1986 without ever having been elected president, what's to prevent you from staying ... and staying ... and staying?

Gloria, thanks to the stupidity of Filipinos, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has been in Malacañang for six years and two days. And counting....

Davide's ad interim appointment

THERE REALLY IS NOTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT ad interim appointments. And there should be nothing unusual about the ad interim appointment of Justice (Ret) Jardeleza Hilario Davide as ambassador to the United Nations. But, I guess, what is significant is that Davide presided in the impeachment trial of President Joseph Estrada and administered the oath of office on Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as successor to President Estrada. These facts make him memorable in the mind of Estrada's camp when it is member of the Commission on Appointments. But let us just look at the legalities of the matter.

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

First, what are ad interim appointments?

There are certain important government offices, an appointment to which normally needs the consent of the Commission on Appointments. But the Commission on Appointments sometimes only when Congress is in session. The Constitution therefore has provided for situations when vacancies must be filled while Congress is in recess.

Whether the Constitutional Commission of 1986 was deliberating on the appointment power of the President, the original proposal on the subject did not contain a provision for appointments during congressional recess. But when it was remembered that the 1935 Constitution had such provision, an addition was introduced. It provided: "The President shall have the power to make appointments during the recess of the Congress, whether voluntary or compulsory, but such appointments shall be effective only until disapproval by the Commission on appointments or until the next adjournment of the Congress." It is an appointment power open to nature, and the circumstances that it is subject to confirmation by the Commission on Appointments does not alter its permanent characteristics."

The current Supreme Court confirmed this in 2002 saying, "The Constitution imposes no condition on the effectivity of an ad interim appointment, and thus an ad interim appointment takes effect immediately. The appointee can at once assume office and exercise, as a de jure officer, all the powers pertaining to the office."

It is understood that the appointment of Davide will be challenged or has now been challenged in the United Nations itself. I believe that such a challenge is an exercise in futility and can only embarrass the challenger. I do not anticipate that anything will come out of his challenge. International authorities accept the legality of decisions of de jure local authorities within their jurisdiction unless what is known in law as the "act of usurpation."

There are only two ways in which an ad interim appointment may be terminated. First, it is terminated when Congress bypasses it, that is, when Congress adjourns without any action on the subject by the Commission on Appointments. Second, it is bypassed if the President cannot renew the ad interim appointment. There is no constitutional limit on the number of renewals.

Second, it is terminated when disapproved by the commission. Disapproval is the definitive act that the appointment should end and not be renewed.

What are the chances of a disapproval of Davide's appointment? It seems to me that the fact that the appointment has been sitting there with out unfavorable action may be an indication that the majority of the commissioners are intended to support the appointee. The senate president would be with Davide.

In the answer to this question, we are leaving political matters. The law on the subject is that the commission, by constitutional command, acts by a majority vote. This means that a majority votes for "Yes" or a majority vote of "No" should end the appointee. The Senate president presides over a body of 12 senators and 11 representatives. If the body does not vote to disapprove and neither votes to approve, it can only mean that the body wants to approve but does not wish to displease a senator or members or some other influential person. So no action is taken and meanwhile the officer stays in office. Would you call that a win-win situation? Alas, the beauty of politics!

'English First' policy will hurt learning

THERE IS MUCH TO BE SAID ABOUT THE DECLINE IN English proficiency in this country. But legislating English as the medium of instruction—as proposed by the Online Bill—is not the solution. In fact not just English, but also Filipino and Math proficiency will decline should this law pass.

Rather than propose that English be the sole medium of learning, we should in fact promote multilingualism (English, Filipino and one other language) in the classroom.

COMMENTARY

Juan Miguel Luz

The Japanese will never forget the heritage for English, which the Chinese abandon blankets or Cantonese for the so-called global language. Neither would the Scandinavians, Germans or Dutch (heck) the French. Why then are we so quick to ditch Filipino for English?

The overall concern about the decline in English proficiency is the correct one and reflected. Many employers speak of job applicants with appalling spoken and written English skills. They argue that this deficiency is a "bar comparative advantage" as shown by the dismal hiring rates of the growing call center industry.

But is poor English proficiency really the cause of our global uncompetitiveness? Or is it our low productivity and the inability to deliver consistent quality that bars us?

The problem is not poor English. It is poor English. Sentence and Math skills. Weak English proficiency is not the sole determinant of poor overall achievement; it is merely a factor.

Thomas Baldrige shows that young children learn how to read and acquire numeracy faster and better when taught in their mother tongue. Their achievement rates in higher grade levels are better than those who are taught in a language other than what they speak at home.

These findings have been replicated by the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL), which uses the "mother tongue first" teaching pioneering children to read and write in their own indigenous people. These pupils have had relatively high literacy and numeracy scores in DepEd (Department of Education) tests.

The TIMSS (Trends in Math and Science Survey) test is administered here in English, making no one of the very few countries that take the test in a language that is not generally spoken at home. We do poorly in TIMSS. (The Japanese take TIMSS in Japanese, the Finns in Finnish.) But would taking the test in Filipino make for better scores?

The Department of Science and Technology did conduct such a test in Filipino and the results were equally dismal. Therefore, it's not merely a language. It is simply that children aren't learning Science and Math well enough to solve problems.

On the other hand, "Sinaunang," the Science program on television, is broadcast in Filipino.

In Bilingual Ed, then head of the National Institute of Science and Mathematics Education Development at the University of the Philippines wrote: "Training in English does not significantly disadvantage pupils who are taught in 'Sinaunang' using Filipino as a medium. Understanding of the concepts in Filipino appears to facilitate transfer of learning to English."

These children however are not limited to English. In fact, "Ulirat Ka" is a program on television that promotes Bisnaismen bilingual during recitations and discussions."

But clearly, these children learn Science and Math. "Pupils in Grades 2 and 5 who watch 'Ulirat Ka' attain mastery level (i.e. 50-67 percent of the concepts learned), while those not exposed to the program master only 30-35 percent of the items. Pupils in Grade 6 are also capable of supposedly (sp. tr. 4-option multiple choice questions ... longer tests (i.e., more than 30 items) can also be used for them."

In East Asia, the national or local language is used as the medium of learning for young children. English is taught as a subject—not as the medium of learning—and proficiency is seen as a key to connecting to the world, but as the key to learning.

We, however, seem to want to destroy learning. We were recruited to the world to be competitive before we learn the fundamentals.

The current Digital policy on the medium of learning only by learning English. Secretary Lapus Gonzalez is named. Another bedrock was after all a Brigadier.

The policy says that the child's mother tongue shall be the medium of learning in Grades 1 to 3 because the 3 R's and Fundamental Math and Science concepts are introduced at these grade levels. Makabayan (Social Studies) shall be taught in the mother tongue as well.

English and Filipino are to be taught as subjects.

If Mandarin someday became the global language for business, would you—as English speaker—learn your Science and Math concepts if it were taught to you in Mandarin? Probably not. The same would hold true for the young learner anywhere. In the archipelago who does not speak English—or Mandarin—as home?

For Grades 4 to 6, there is a progressive shift to English as the medium of learning for English, Science and Math subjects. By this time, the concepts have taken root, and problem-solving and application are the learning objectives. Filipino will still be used to teach Filipino and Makabayan subjects.

For high school, the mid-grade policy on language is reversed.

The Online Bill is now in Congress, having been passed in the House of Representatives. Ironically, it does not deviate from the current DepEd policy. It is a dangerous bill because, because it places a mandatory emphasis on English as the medium of learning. As such, the young learners and their teachers will concentrate on the language, not on Science and Math and literacy (that is more fundamental to learning).

The key to better English is better implementation; more teacher training in grammar, composition, vocabulary; more emphasis on communicative English usage in schools and in campus journalism; campus radio; assigned days for English and Filipino communication and the like; more bilingual teaching books and education contents and spelling bees (both in English and Filipino).

English is essential for communication, but Science and Math are essential for competitiveness.

We need to be more creative and committed to better English teaching, but not at the expense of Science and Math. Legislation is not necessarily creative. The Online Bill in fact ignores world experience on learning by prescribing a solution that misses the problem completely: Why are Philippine schools children not learning?

Juan Miguel Luz is president of the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction and a former education undersecretary.

Silent bells

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Nowaifen Macalop

I WAKE UP AT 4:30 EVERY MORNING TO THE sound of the call to prayer from the mosque next by and often prayers. I come my second cup of coffee, chamber through the bathroom window to the beat of the distant music before where I wait for daybreak, something I would never want to miss.

After morning has broken, I go downstairs, switch on the TV to tune for the "Focus Page" segment of GMA-7's "Unang Hirit" to get a preview of the latest pages of the day's newspapers, and after that, I return to my room by the window to read the rest of the day's reading of what God has to say.

I read first the Koran and then the Bible, a few verses of one whole chapter each from both the Old and New Testaments. I always begin that day by reading with the Al Fatiha from the Koran and end with the Book of Psalms.

So if on one, the birds commence their early morning song. One of them is instantly recognizable; he has a distinct melody all his own and he sings it with such bravado, almost boastful. I have named him Boastful. Of course, I have listened to generations of Boastfuls, but it does not matter.

By this time, the morning sun has started to creep up on the garden, which very soon will be flooded in sunlight, bringing via the varied hues of the flowers, while casting a golden, dewy light on the petals of the leaves and grass. That means it is time to leave the office, remove my shoes and to pull out much-while listening to the news on air.

And as it was meant to be, as if they are in perfume the finale of this wondrous operetta, the butterflies come fluttering in, in different sizes, shapes and colors, and I think God had I am also among His creatures who enjoy the simple things on the point

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An uncommon doctor

LETTERS

I WOULD LIKE TO COMMEND THIS very young doctor, whose article appeared in the "Broadsheet" section last Jan. 12, 2007.

Dr. Che Zablan reminds me of Ben, James Taylor, whose accounts as a basic doctor's tried years have built to his book "Doctor to the Barrios." He was also a young doctor then who ventured in the remotest barrios of Cavite to local people and help them live better lives.

Dr. Zablan's zeal to serve in the barrios is very commendable and admirable. It is not easy to uproot oneself from the comforts of city life, then to move on an unfamiliar place. I hope his story will spur other medical practitioners to take on such a worthy cause. Serving those who cannot compensate or pay back is very fulfilling and, of course, very Christian-like. I'm happy to know that there are still medical practitioners who

—GIL ROMILLO,
Del Rosario College,
Castilloang, Columbia City

Columbio is not within 6ID AOR

GEOFFREY MAYTIM AND ELOISE Again in of Inquirer Mindanao referred to Lt. Col. Julieto Anda of the 6th Infantry Division (6ID) as the source of their news story titled "Bodies of Cebu bound, Army says commander shot dead." (PDI, 1/2, 08/06)

Apparently, Maytim and Agoto and Columbio that the area of Zabalbio in Sultan Kudarat province is still within the 6ID's area of responsibility (AOR). The town is now within the AOR of the Army's 10th Infantry Division (10ID). Prior to the 10ID's spokesperson and civil military officer, I cannot issue a press statement or talk

for and on behalf of the 10ID, 36...

—ELIZETH B. ARAOS,
Lieutenant colonel (INF) GSC) PA,
assistant chief of staff for (G9, G7
6ID Infantry Hamtalisa
Division, PA, Camp Siongco, Awang,
Sans Cebu Davao, Magindanao

This serious misinformation options interview with Lt. Col. Julieto Anda of the AFP. For several years, the AFP has been our source of stories happening in Central Mindanao.

—GEOFFREY MAYTIM,
correspondent,
Inquirer Mindanao Bureau

Lussenhop contradicts himself

US EMBASSY SPOKESMAN MATTHEW Lussenhop denied that US Special Forces in the South are engaged in combat. (PDI, 1/14/07) The denial is understandable and perplexing at the same time.

It is understandable because he should not have said otherwise. To admit that US troops are engaged in war here violates Philippine territory would be to admit that the US troops are violating the Philippine Constitution. This is an open secret. To admit that the deployment of 60 troops in the South, something the US Embassy does not want.

The statement is also perplexing because it is contradictory. Lussenhop said, "We're US troops to do the Philippines advise, assist, share information with their Philippine counterparts, but they do not engage in combat and they have no direct role in combat operations because combat operations are 100 percent Filipino."

Filipino troops are engaged in combat. If visiting US troops are "assisting them, then they are also engaged in combat.

Lussenhop's claim that US troops have no role in combat operations flies in the face of multiple eyewitness testimony claiming that US troops were seen accompanying Filipino troops to the front lines, directing the battle operations, witnessing operations, operating equipment and flying spy planes. It is their word against Lussenhop's.

The claim also contradicts journalists' reports on US troops actually joining Filipino troops on patrol, engaging alleged Abu Sayyaf members in firefights. It is dark word against Lussenhop's.

More interestingly, the claim directly contradicts the statement of the very US troops who have participated in the operations. Writing in US military publications, these troops have admitted how they participated in the "ongoing counterterrorism warfare operations" in the Philippines.

The current commander of the Special Operations Command Pacific, Col. David Maxwell, is on record as saying that their mission is "to conduct counterterrorism training in the Southern Philippines through, by and with the AFP [Armed Forces of the Philippines] to help the Philippine government negotiate the population and destroy the terrorist organizations." He is also on record as saying that, contrary to the Supreme Court ruling, US troops are not banned from engaging in combat.

The United States' own documents more than "counterterrorist warfare" refers to all these operations that SOCs conduct "through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported and directed in varying degrees by an external source." The terms "guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities and unconventional warfare" are mentioned.

It is the word of the US troops against the word of the US Embassy spokesperson.

—ROBERT MOCES,
researcher, focus on the Global South,
19 Magdalena St., 1119 Diliman, QC

Why pay for health care services

THIS IS IN REACTION TO SYE ROSE de Leon's letter regarding the Philippine Government's decision to privatize its service fees. (PDI, 1/18/07)

De Leon is wrong to think that health care delivery should be provided by the government. We all know, at least, of course, it costs money to provide health care services and, therefore, someone's got to pay for them.

But we also know that the resources of government are perennially scarce, and if we are to prioritize the budgetary dozens/level of health care by country's underprivileged, then all of us... government, the business sector, private individuals and you, even the underprivileged themselves... have to pitch in to finance health care delivery.

It is not unreasonable that the poor avail of more and economic means to effective and efficient health care delivery. De Leon need only ask the majority of municipal and city health officers in Metro Manila, many of whom charge their indigent patients for medicines and service fees for the use of city health clinics and facilities. Charging service fees empowers the poor patient; it makes him feel less of a mendicant and more of a responsible, contributing citizen.

—JOSE MIGUEL S. CUBARRUBIA, MD,
The Garilla Foundation,
39-F Tordesillas Plaza,
105 Pl. dela Costa St.,
Salcedo Village, Makati City 1227

Nicole's mistake didn't make her any less a victim

I READ A LETTER TO THE EDITOR accusing the loquitos of bias against convicted rapist Daniel Smith of the US Marines. (PDI, 1/11/07) Maybe the article replicating here and there would make the paper sound impartial. But I agree with the editor's sentiments that guilt is not determined by public opinion, at least not in this country.

Nicole's case does not fall under Nicole, but with the Mutiny in the sun

make her any less a victim? Maybe she made a mistake that night by going with the Marines; and, maybe she was too trusting. But she was absolutely sure her free doesn't mean that she can't be raped, right? Rape is committed when a person uses force, threat or intimidation or be able to have sexual intercourse with another. There is no legal requirement that the victim must have an impeccable reputation in order to "qualify" as a rape victim.

In the eyes of the law, Smith is guilty. If the lawyers have any leader for the case, they should not finish the legal proceedings, good for him. It is hoped throughout the case unfolds typically will be resolved and that justice is more effective and for consumers' rights about their personal interests.

—ANNE DEPRIETY,
deprietya@yahoo.co.uk

Arroyo administration is not unlike Burma's junta

A SPOKESPERSON OF THE JUNTA under Than Shwe Maung Aung Kyaw, the latest head of the world's Asian Generals, who had the guts to speak on the Burmese military leaders to the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

In fact, the Arroyo administration is identical to the Burmese junta in terms of gross violations of human rights, including the killing of journalists, disappearances of persons labor leaders and flashpoints. Crispin Beltran and the thousands of cases of summary executions, arrests, enforced disappearances and forced killings.

Clearly, Ms. Arroyo has no moral authority to appeal for democracy in Burma as she ranks in the top of Asian puppet presidents who have consistently supported the UN war on terror.

—ORLY PUNO,
secretary general,
Promotion of Church People's
Response (PCPR), 8776 dela, QC

Across the NATION

5 govs want Iloilo attackers to resign

By Hector P. Bergonia Jr. and Felipe Gozo
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—FIVE GOVERNORS AND A CITY mayor in Western Visayas allied to President Macapagal-Arroyo have demanded the resignation of policemen and officials involved in last Wednesday's armed assault of the Iloilo provincial capitol.

"We call on those behind the [police assault] to resign," Antique Gov. Salvacion Zaldivar-Perez said in a telephone interview.

Perez, chair of the Regional Development Council, said she shared this stand with governors Joseph Marañon (Negros Occidental), Al Rahman Hans (Kalinga), Carlito Marquez (Aklan), Vicente Bermejo (Capiz) and Bono Oy, Mayor Inocencio del Rosario.

The Western Visayas officials issued the call because the assault "brought shame to the President and a black eye to the country in the international community," Perez said.

"The attack brought turmoil in Western Visayas and to the peaceloving people of the region. This has never happened here before," she added.

The Commission on Human Rights and other officials have condemned the police assault, launched after Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas Jr. refused to abide by the order of the Ombudsman dismissing him and ran-presidential board members from office for graft acts, for executive acts of force against unarmed civilians.

About 200 anti-riot policemen and heavily armed members of the Regional Mobile Group stormed the capitol, destroying glass doors and windows to get to Tupas and supporters of Tupas, employees and journalists were hurt in the process.

The CHR and the police were conducting separate investigations of the incident but Western Visayas police director Chief Supt. Wilfredo Cuñar had earlier admitted that some members of the assault force had committed excesses in the operation.

Perez said they were concerned about the impact of the assault on the region's image and tourism industry coming just days before the Ati-Atihan festival in the capital town of Kalibo and a week before the 20-staggering Festival in Iloilo City.

"This might create a negative impact on our tourism programs which is a priority of the President," said Perez.

She said the policemen and officers involved in the operation would no longer be welcome in Western Visayas and will be considered persona non grata.

Police officials who commanded the assault force will not be appointed to posts in the region, according to Perez. "They have no more business being in Region VI."

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez on Tuesday defended the policemen saying they were merely implementing lawful orders after they received reports that Tupas had armed supporters inside the capitol.

Gonzalez had said it was unfair to blame the policemen when they were just responding to the pinning up of barricades and locking of doors to the capitol.

But Perez said the unconventional operation has caused a backlash against the President "who had nothing to do" with the dismissal of Tupas and the armed assault on the capitol.

Perez said the President had agreed to the request of Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado, president of the League of Provinces of the Philippines and Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines, to give Tupas 72 hours reporting last Wednesday to give up his post.

Perez added that she and Aumentado had offered to go to the Iloilo provincial capitol and ask Tupas to step down if the deadline lapsed without a court order stopping his dismissal.

But Perez said the Department of Interior and Local Government and police officials did not have to honor the Ombudsman's order because the President is sorry her decision to give Tupas 72 hours to leave his post.

"They defied the President's order and now she is being blamed for the actions of some of her people," said Perez. She refused to name the officials, but she added that the public already knows them.

Perez said the President was busy in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) meetings in Cebu when the Ombudsman and DILG issued the dismissal order against local officials.

In Roxas City, the Capiz provincial board passed Friday a resolution commending the board force used by the Regional Mobile Group (RMG) during the attempt to physically remove Tupas from the Iloilo provincial capitol.

Capiz Board Member Enrique Montilla said what the RMG forces did was simple lack of respect and "overkill" during [illegible] operations.

Thousands bury Capiz town vice mayor, 2 others

DAÑAZ, CAPIZ—THE RELATIVES of slain Tapaz Vice Mayor Victor Gardoce and two others continue to seek justice even as thousands of mourners braved the heat of the midday sun to attend the simultaneous burial of the three victims.

The sympathizers, relatives and friends of Gardoce, Cecilia Village chief Leonardo Gimeco and the vice mayor's driver Anthony Grapilla stayed until 3:30 p.m. at the Tapaz public cemetery assembled at their grimy stomach to bring their loved one to their final resting place.

The three were gunned down on Dec. 20, 2006 at the Tech barangay hall.

Their remains were brought first to Tapaz Civic Center 6:30 a.m. for a necrological service before these were brought to Tapaz Catholic Church.

Several placards and posters, seeking justice for the killings and denouncing political dynasties, were seen in the state center and main streets in the Tapaz poblacion.

The victims' relatives urged witnesses to the killing and those who have information to help identify the killers and masterminds.

Hermenio Gardoce, the vice mayor's wife, also apologized to the families of Gimeco and Grapilla.

Gardoce's wife noted that the two would have been alive if not for her husband's invitation. She said she believed that her husband was the true target of the ambushers.

Gardoce's supporters and friends have called on Bonoanon to run for mayor in the May elections. Gardoce had been planning to run for the city's top post.

Hermenio Bantuasante, who is the chief of the Municipal Planning and Development Office (MPDO), said the would-be mayor's family first before making any decision.

Earlier, the police presented Mayor Honorable Raimundo Jr. and some Provincial Board Members, but Ronald Esmundo from visiting the victims' wake and interment to avoid any untoward incident.

The police have filed multiple murder charges against the board member's personal driver, Noel Fuentespina, and four unidentified persons, before the Capiz provincial prosecutor's office.

The 82nd Mobile Group is also on the duties of Tapaz police after Chief Supt. Wilfredo Cuñar, regional police office director, relieved en tire 11 the municipal police force to ease the tension brought about by the murder. Felipe Gozo, Inquirer Visayas

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Army official scores Left's claim on killings

By Jerry E. Esplanada
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—A TOP MILITARY official in Eastern Visayas retorted last week the claims of militant groups that the killing of a Bayan Muna member in Northern Samar signaled the start of killing people who are involved in progressive or militant groups.

Col. Francis Lorenzo, commanding officer of the 803rd Infantry Brigade, which covers Eastern Samar and some parts of western Samar, blasted the claims as unfair and without any basis at all.

"We in the armed forces of the Philippines abhor any form of killings. We, in all times, observe and respect human rights. Under my brigade, I don't tolerate that. Anybody who commits any human rights violations will be investigated and punished accordingly," he said.

He said he issued an order to all his four battalion commanders to make sure there will not be any human rights violations in their anti-insurgency campaigns.

The 803 Inf Brigade, which is based in Camp Ovida, Borongan, town in Samar, is composed of the 34th IB, 62nd IB, 46th IB and 52nd IB.

University professor

Unidentified assailants shot to death Jose Maria Cui, founding chairman of Bayan Muna and provincial coordinator of Bantaynon Samarnon Alliance, while he was in front of his class at the University of Eastern Philippines in Northern Samar (UEP) in Catarman.

The 53-year-old Cui, who was teaching social sciences at the time, was hit in his chest and head. Police authorities have yet to identify the suspects.

Several militant and human rights groups in the region have condemned Cui's killing.

Karina Castillo, acting secretary general of Barangay Bantayan Bayan, said the killing was part of the military's Oplan Bantay Laya, which aims to "neutralize" those in the progressive and militant groups.

Lamian noted that the military always get the blame whenever a number of militant groups gets killed.

He also challenged the military and progressive groups to comment on the recent killing of a military asset in Catbalogan, Samar, allegedly gunned down by a Sparrow Unit of the New People's Army.

The military official was referring to the shooting of Augusto Dadivas, 53, in front of the provincial capitol last Wednesday night.

Dadivas was a former NPA member but he surrendered to the government during the administration of country-turned-Army Major General Jovito Palparan, who was then the commanding general of the 8th Infantry Division.

Dadivas was the provincial coordinator of the Alliance of Nationalists and Democrats, an anti-communist group.

Security guard

Another military asset was also gunned down in Catbalogan, Samar on Friday morning by two men riding in motorcycles, according to Lt. Jose Mario Chico, chief public affairs officer of the Army's 8ID (D).

Killed was Alfonso Subillo, 48, at 7:45 in the morning while he was about to enter the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) Catbalogan Branch in Go Hortaleza Street.

The victim, who worked as a security guard of the DBP, was hit in the head.

Witnesses brought him to the provincial hospital but he attending physicians declared him dead on arrival.

In Albay, a former radio broadcaster, who was a former NPA member, was shot dead by suspected rebels in his residence in Barangay Mariroy, Daraga town.

Jose Lorenzo, 56, food vendor, was shot dead at around 7 p.m. Thursday while tending his store in Barangay Mariroy, said Albay deputy provincial director Arnold Alba.

Broadcaster

Daraga police chief Supt. Jose Gaspayo said two gunmen approached the victim and fired at him at close range while a third gunman served as a lookout.

Lorenzo suffered two bullet wounds in the head and died instantly, said Gaspayo.

Gaspayo said Lorenzo's killing was not related to his media work and alleged he was liquidated by his former comrades for his participation in the activities of the Kilusang Sosyo-Ekonomiks Antiterorismong Inisyatibo.

Greg Bautista, anchorman of radio program "Bicolnon" aired over dxDS in Legazpi City where the victim was connected, said Lorenzo had stopped reporting in his program for over six months now and concentrated on his "kabuhayan" business.

Glenn Rutaquio, president of the Kilusan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas-Albay chapter, said they were hoping if to police investigation could determine if Lorenzo's killing was related to his being a former media man.

Some former colleagues in the local media said the victim had been very vocal in his criticisms of the rebel organizations which could have caused his death. With a report from Bobby Jacinto and Ephraim Agcullar, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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Militants hold Edsa II commemoration protest

CALAMBA CITY—ABOUT 500 MEMBERS of various political organizations from Luzon, Laguna, Batangas and Quezon converged in Calamba City at 4 p.m. Saturday to call for the "ouster of the traitor of Edsa II."

The protest group Pagkakaisa ng mga Maguindanao sa Laguna (Pamalaq), the provincial chapter of Kilusang Mag-bubukid ng Pilipinas, also held a demonstration in Sta. Cruz, Laguna on Saturday morning, with streamers and placards bearing the call to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"We will not let a heartless and ruthless ruler remain in the seat of power," said Arman Alhambra, secretary general of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Southern Tagalog (Bayan-ST) during a rally here.

Not worth the trust

Alhambra said that during President Arroyo's three years in power, she had proven that she was not worth the trust of the people.

"The election is not fraud, and we will not allow [Mr Arroyo] to continue in power," he said.

He said the President ended the country's democracy and put misery by allowing the 'ZTE to have custody over convicted former Cpl. Daniel Smith.

The youth party-list Kabataan Party also expressed dismay over Mr. Arroyo's leadership, stating "the President, betrayed the people's hopes of unprecedented economic crisis under her administration, despite promises of bread, saying the recent hikes, which included a higher education budget and decent employment."

Quotes

Fr. Benigno Karlson Gr. parish priest, answered that thousands of students from the University of the Philippines in Los Baños and other schools in the region took part in the four days. Our eventually led to the ouster of former President Joseph Estrada.

"Now, 10 years after, the state of the youth has become worse. Ironically, it is these students that suffered hard blows from the Arroyo administration with the 200 percent increase in UP and the increased number of tuition hikers in various universities and colleges. Bibit Catherine Calleja, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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Prayers doomed Janjalani

Front page 1

ounce platoon led by Jul Ic. Romulo Dimayuga climbed upon a small group of armed men coming in hammocks in the forests of Upper Tumaic in Sulaman, they believed that among that group was the country's most-wanted Abu Sayyaf leader.

Dimayuga said he could not forget the distinct, plaintive voice rising from the midst of the group. The men sounded like he was singing and praying while everyone else was asleep, or just resting and listening to him.

The lieutenant, fresh from the Philippine Military Academy and out on his first field assignment, could not tell for sure if the hymn he was hearing in those wee hours of morning was in Arabic or Tausug.

"I can't understand Arabic and Tausug. All I was thinking at the time was that, maybe, he was the one in charge because it was early morning, almost 5 o'clock, and he could afford to make noise," Dimayuga recounted in an interview with the Inquirer the other day.

"It struck me that whoever he was, he must have been somebody who could afford to make such a noise without being reprimanded or stopped."

Close quarters combat

Using his night-vision goggles, Dimayuga said he could see that some of the men had awakened and had started to prepare breakfast.

He had no idea what Janjalani looked like and the man who was singing had his head bowed, as though he was reading lyrics from a small book.

Only few minutes separated Dimayuga's men and the armed group.

"We could have secured as such other," Dimayuga recalled. "A few movements and our bodies would have bumped. That was how close we were, so we had to make a quick decision."

Attack begins

Being the platoon leader, Dimayuga said his instinct told him he should issue no time. Quietly, he signaled his men to start throwing grenades in the direction of the voice, at the men in the hammocks.

The grenade blasts were followed by volumes of fire from Dimayuga's troops. Stunned from their sleep, the surprised group answered with their own fire.

Sense of panic

"There was heavy firing from them. They were sure to clear quarters eventually, immediately, there were wounded on our side," Dimayuga said.

Six of Dimayuga's men, all on their first field assignment like him, died in the exchange.

Then they heard the distress voice again, this time issuing commands in a language that Dimayuga and his men could not understand, and assumed it was either Tausug or Arabic.

The cries that came from the voice seemed to create panic among the armed group.

Bullet silences the voice

Then the man stood up.

In seconds, a bullet struck him in the neck and he fell instantly.

As snipers, Dimayuga's men had been trained to aim at specific targets. When somebody fired the shot that cut down Janjalani, Dimayuga could not tell for sure.

"I can't really tell whose bullet hit him. Really since it was still dark when we started the attack," Dimayuga said.

Reinforcements come

Suddenly, Dimayuga had a sense that he and his men had been surrounded by a bigger group that swooned in have come from nowhere to help their besieged comrades.

Dimayuga was reminded by the firing from the reinforcements.

He said the size of the new group gave him a fear that he and his men must have chanced upon a really important personality.

"The way they retaliated indicated that they had suffered a great loss, but at that moment, we had no idea who it was."

DNA test

Dimayuga was in Jolo, Cotabato, undergoing yet another training, when the bad news reached him on Saturday and broke to him the news. The results of a DNA test taken from a body which the Marines had dug up in the jungle ensured that the man they took out with a bullet to the neck was the "emir" (commander or chief) of the country's fiercest bandit group—a man linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network.

He received the news calmly—and with pride. The confirmation of Janjalani's death, he said, brought honor to Magdalena.

A worthy cause

"It also means that the death of my fellow Marines and the wounding of 16 others were for a great cause," he said.

Did he think Janjalani's death would put an end to the Abu Sayyaf threat?

Dimayuga said the Abu Sayyaf might take a while to find a successor to Janjalani, but he was certain someone would eventually take over.

To be willing to be deployed in Jolo again to go after the remaining Abu Sayyaf members?

"Yes, if I am ordered to go back," he said. "I am a soldier, it's my duty to fight."

'Gate-up to Heaven'

Dimayuga was a member of the First Recon Class 12 trained specifically to hunt Janjalani and his band. The platoon was trained by Navy Marine Brig. Gen. Robert Wilson, who was among the first Marine officers that fought the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan in 1995.

When Dimayuga and his men first arrived in Sulu, they had reported to 3rd Marine Brigade Commander Brig. Gen. Juancho Sabban—an intelligence and tactical officer that oversaw the first camp of the Abu Sayyaf in Upper Kagayanan, Isabela.

That camp was called al-Madinah. It means "Gateway to Heaven."

AHMED Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon crosses out the photo of Khadaffy Janjalani, chief of the Abu Sayyaf, who carried a $5-million price on his head during a news conference at Camp Aguinaldo.

WHO WILL REPLACE JANJALANI?

THE DEATH OF THE PHILIPPINES' most-wanted terror suspect leaves his al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group with no strong successor, security officials said Tuesday.

A list of Abu Sayyaf commanders that the military and police say may rise up as successor to Khaddafy Janjalani includes:

● **RADULAN SAHIRON:** a semi-retired Moro rebel commander in his 70s based in the forested mountains of Patikul on southern Jolo Island, ex-commander of the Moro National Liberation Front, a rebel group which signed a 1996 peace accord with the government, Sahiron is the Abu Sayyaf's most senior fighter.

However, he lacks Janjalani's extensive local and foreign contacts and has often been hounded in ops home in recent years because of his many illnesses, including arthritis and diabetes. Washington has offered a $200,000 reward for his capture.

● **DIULON SAHILON:** Another former MILF commander based in Luuk on Jolo Island. He is believed to have from 20-30 armed men. He was last mentioned with Janjalani in July last year.

● **ABU PUJA:** A former MILF rebel based in Jolo's mountainous hideouts with an estimated 50 to 70 armed followers. He is called by some as "Da Afia" because of his purported ability to perform faith treatments on wounded guerrillas and ailing villagers.

Puja, believed to be in his 30s, is not known to have extensive local and foreign militant contacts but he reportedly harbored Dulmatac and MILF men for several months in his mountain stronghold last year.

The United States has offered a reward of $100,000 for his capture. AP

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'Final battle against Abus at hand'

ARMED Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. at a news conference at Camp Aguinaldo. The end of the Abu Sayyaf is near. AP

"Right now, they are disorganized and on the run," he told reporters.

In Jolo's city hall, about 60 soldiers from the 35th infantry Battalion and 32nd Division reconnaissance company were on board three military trucks on their way to their patrol base when they came under attack in Parang, Sulu, Army spokesperson Maj. Ernesto Torres said.

Torres did not mention casualty figures among the Abu Sayyaf but said six of them were captured in pursuit operations.

Asked if the ambush was part of the recent military attacks, Torres said "that can be considered, since the neutralization of its top leaders."

Samples matched

Barreto would not go on the air to call the attack a retribution for Janjalani's death.

"We call it a 'hasty ambush,' Benggalon' long," he said.

Barreto said the bandits fired at the soldiers, then withdrew into the jungle with no soldiers in pursuit.

Confirmation that the cadaver surrendered by Misuarez in Pinamal on Dec. 27 was that of Janjalani came from a DNA test conducted by the US Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The test matched samples from the remains with those obtained from Janjalani's brother, Hector, after gave samples of his saliva only after much persuasion.

Hector is serving a life term at the New Bilibid Prisons for the kidnapping of an American tourist.

The samples matched.

Another blow

Janjalani, for whom rupees the United States offered a reward of $5 million, was believed to have been mortally wounded in an encounter in Patikul, Sulu, last Sept. 6.

In a further huge blow to the Abu Sayyaf, another of its top leaders, Jainal Antel Sali, alias Abu Solaiman, was killed in an encounter with soldiers in Tipo-Tipo, Sulu, on Jan. 13.

Intelligence sources say the "Engineer" because of his education, is said to have planned the group's most dangerous attacks, including the 2004 Superferry bombing near Manila which killed more than 100 people.

The military believes Abu Sayyaf leaders Jacilan Daguiln and Radullan Sahiron are among those in line to replace Janjalani (See related story on Page A-23).

Sinaware said it was "not impossible" for the younger generation of Abu Sayyaf members to take the place of Janjalani and Solaiman.

A turning point

Under Janjalani's leadership, the Abu Sayyaf turned to terrorism, specializing in kidnappings for ransom and bombings.

More than 7,000 troops are scouring the dense jungles of Sulu for remnants of the Abu Sayyaf, who are also believed to be preparing Jemaah Islamiyah bombers in Dulawan in and Umar Patek, a suspect in the October 2002 bombings in Bali.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said Janjalani's death "marks the mortal turning point for the Abu Sayyaf."

"All in all, all these local prowess, the fusion of intelligence and tutoring with the United States and our allies in the region and most of all, the vigilant support of the people and communities...have combined to breach the deadly ring of evil, put its cells in disarray and laid them open for the final blow," Ms Arroyo said.

Economy is key

She vowed her administration would "mop up the remnants of terror" as it moved to develop Mindanao's economy.

Still, she said, "we must not let our guard down."

US forces have provided combat training and weapons, including night-vision goggles, to Filipino troops in the battle against the Abu Sayyaf. They have also helped track down militants with high-tech surveillance equipment.

US help

Analysts said Janjalani's death would not destroy the Abu Sayyaf "but a sustained ground offensive, backed up with economic development, could eventually wipe them out.

"Abu Sayyaf grows and regroups through hardship, grievances and abuses by government officials," said Sean Hanson, managing director of Manila-based risk consultancy Pacific Strategies and Assessments.

"If they (the Philippine government) can keep up the momentum action they can possibly turn the corner on this. If they run their backs on this and move on to other things then the Abu Sayyaf will just regroup."

Experts say the most success is due to a renewed commitment by Philippine military chiefs to eliminate Abu Sayyaf, and crucially, to US training, tactics and hardware.

Clan ties

Now the longer term, however, the Philippine military will have to maintain its commitment in preventing Jolo and nearby islands resurgering as bases for freelancers from militants, analysts say.

Political distraction is another risk.

Other experts say that even if the government succeeds in wiping out the Abu Sayyaf, there may well be other disgruntled militants to pick up the fight.

"It's all about kinship and clan ties. Organizational charts not matter. It's liberal," said Gregorio Bituin Jr., political science professor at Sinsuran College in Sinsuran.

In addition to the family ties that criss-cross rival groups, Jolo also has a deep-rooted warrior culture that makes it difficult to tame.

For years at least, the military pursuit of the Abu Sayyaf and their Indonesian allies has kept them on the move, preventing any new large-scale attacks and hampering recruitment of new members.

"It really think they are losing can topped on Jolo," said Sinsuran. The military campaign is really quite impressive."

With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, AP, Reuters

Family says Janjalani alive

ISABELA CITY—THE FAMILY OF Khadaffy Janjalani believes the Abu Sayyaf leader is still alive.

One of his sisters, who asked not to be identified by her real name, said their 72-year-old father, Abubakar, would not believe the results of the DNA test confirming that the man killed in Sulu was his son.

"Whatever is said, our father does not believe it. No! Sun, Khadaffy is still alive," the sister said in Filipino.

Asked why, she said: "Maybe that is called a father's instinct."

The elder Janjalani refused to face reporters and instead sent his daughter as the family's representative during an interview at the family residence in Barangay Tabuk in Basilan.

The sister questioned the findings, insisting that her brother's cousin had refused to give samples for a DNA match with samples taken from the cadaver in Sulu.

"We heard that Hector did not agree to a DNA test. Now, there is a result ... it is confusing," she said.

Hector initially refused to take part in the area but prison sources told the Inquirer he later agreed, purportedly under duress, to give samples of his saliva. Inquirer Mindanao

Janjalani: Prophet gave order to kidnap

JANJALANI: Bandit, priest, terrorist—they are all the same to us.

(con't. classroom instruction, and other necessities.

Such activities earned him the ire of the military. The vicious (religious scholars) were invited until they decided to debunch the threat by sending him to study Arabic and Islamic studies abroad. Fortunately, even the religious sector of the MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front) helped to find a scholarship slot for him in Libya until he became a member of the MILF heading its far-side Islamic propagation) movement.

QD: You mean, he became a member of the MNLF only when he was already abroad in Libya?

KJ: No. The truth is, however, he's one who did not like it that the oppressive government would foot the MNLF time and again, talking here and there, agreeing on so many things just to end it betrayed. She is one big reason why the late attack left the MNLF and crumbled because organization opportunism in the Philippines.

QD: So when did he establish the MIF?

KJ: When he returned in mid-1989, he hatched down to work immediately on his clandestine activities and at the same time established Al-Harakatul al-Islamiyah (Islamic Movement) as a vehicle to be used once more for Bumiputera[], Sangsa (nation) and against Indigenes, i.e. an independent country, national identity and most of all Islam—meaning, an identity none for the Bangsamoro (Moro nation).

QD: Why, what about the MNLF? I believe they have the same objectives.

KJ: The late arch-leader—exhortingto Abdurajak believed that since the OIC (Organization of the Islamic Conference) was satisfied with the Moro right to self-determination, independence was too forever in favor of the so-called autonomy. Proof is, up to now, nothing came out of that autonomy option. Meantime, my elder brother was coerced and justified in his stance.

QD: How many did Harakatul al-Islamiyah become ASG?

KJ: Abu Sayyaf was the term de gueur of my late brother. he copied it from Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, an Afghan mujahideen (fighters for jihad) who became famous for his practice of beheading (enemies to the faith)—whether Muslim or Christian. Much later, we were infiltrated by government spies. Then, because our loyal subordinates were eliminated, we were left with only a few trusted followers.

QD: That means you bought your firearms locally? From where and who facilitated?

KJ: Yes. There was no problem buying guns then due to the plentiful supply from either gun smugglers, Moron (Philippine National Police Regional Command) or Southern Armed Forces of the Philippines Southern Command), whether officially read such. The late Ismael said he facilitated the purchases.

QD: Who were these Ismael and he you mentioned?

KJ: Ismael Abdul was from Tawi-Tawi and a pioneering member. Then Edwin became one year post-graduate from Indo. He joined us after our return from Afghanistan.

QD: Why, when was al-Harakatul al-Islamiyah (ASG) established? Why were there pioneers from Sulu and Tawi-Tawi?

KJ: Initially, we set down in Indolu, the three Janjalani brothers (Abdurajak, Hector and Khadaffy) with Wahab Akbar (Basilan governor). Then, after two weeks or so, we again sat down with Ismael, Yusu Asiljan and the nephew of Nur Misuru (General Santos).

QD: Is the view accurate that the ASG was a creation of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) or the MIF?

KJ: To repeat, our organization is al-Harakatul al-Islamiyah, but ASG. If they refer to their name ASG, this may be true. But they should be al-Harakatul al-Islamiyah (Sulu's).

QD: Is it allowable for mujahideen to kidnap? Or what basis?

KJ: What but philosophically or religiously, it is allowed. There is basis for kidnappings. Philosophically, it is allowed to kill the enemies, why not allow to just kidnap him? Religiously, we have that the Prophet of Islam who gave the order to kidnap or seize the enemies of Abu Sufflan, isn't it? So, what is the difference of kidnapping or seizing them and now?

QD: What you were talking about I suppose is kidnapping the enemy, not civilians or noncombatants?

KJ: The enemy is not to be distinguished as to whether they are armed or not. In fact, many of our casualties were our civilian non-combatants. Why is it allowed for the opposite soldiers and prohibited for us?

QD: Is it true that al-Harakatul al-Islamiyah was created in order to undermine the MNLF?

KJ: As I said before, if you are talking of al-Harakatul al-Islamiyah, it is not true. As a matter of fact, we were assisted to serve as one of the pillars of the MNLF three-explosion bombs so many forums MNLF commanders were taken in by al-Harakatul al-Islamiyah. If there is a slight gap, it is in the means of achieving the purpose—for us, it's independence, for the MNLF it's autonomy.

QD: Is it true you have links with the Al-Qaida of Osama bin Laden or Ayman Zawahiri?

KJ: We don't even know Bin Laden or any leader of it, how can we have links? What's true is that we have some friendly operatives with us who go with us anywhere. We actually don't mind who they are provided they are willing to be our helping hands and follow our way of doing things here, an excuse for enemy.

QD: So that confirms that there are many OPSs (deep penetration agents) infiltrating your rank and file?

KJ: In the reverse case, yes. But almost all of them were gone since we got their names and deed. They thought few bullets recognizes targets. The few who remain are anyway watched.

QD: How is your organization since you assumed leadership up to now?

KJ: I did not actually expect that I will be chief of MILF after my brother (Abdurajak) passed away and Ex Hector was in jail, that compelled me to shoulder the burden. Fortunately, nothing changed, we are still steadfast in fulfilling the trust he left us.

QD: What is the top priority?

KJ: There are many reasons but it should not be told here since it constitutes a military secret. For now, suffice it to say, we are still over vigilant in fighting the enemy.

QD: How are your communication ways in Sulu?

KJ: I think you know how good and strong they are in Sulu. And it is customary for us to break up into several autonomous groupings for as long as it is agreed before. Until.

QD: Is there anything you can add to what was said already?

KJ: I believe it's all said and we are still monitoring the events in Manila. (This was right after the Feb. 24 & 25 "coup attempt," where the military mainly had to intimidate.)

QD: Thank you so much for your time. What you've clarified would be very helpful.

KJ: Thank you too. We pray it will be put to good use, what we told you for.

Growing up with Gabe

Front page A1

both inside and outside the country. And we planned to do lots of traveling with the kids, but vetoed it the best weather.

By the age of 2, Gabe was already speaking in complete sentences. We have a genius on our hands, my wife Chelo and I thought, even more precocious than his sister.

But then we began to notice that Gabe began talking less and less, until by the age of 3 he was down to one-word sentences. He did not like to play, either with his sister or other children but preferred being by himself. He would play with the boxes his toys came in instead of the toys. He also would get into the kitchen cabinets and play with the whisks and the cooking spoons.

"He was just reacting to a different drummer," I reasoned, which made him more aware of a genius—one who thought outside the box.

But deep down, we suspected that something was wrong—something was off.

It was his third pediatrician, Dr. Jack Lumenhola, who confirmed it. Lumenhola was going with his assessment by a specialist in these directly, not their parents, about what was telling them and treated them as equals. His waiting room was always full.

The minute Gabe came bounding in and jumping in his lap, and after a few questions to Gabe, the doctor set Chelo aside and addressed me. "Your son is autistic," he said matter-of-factly, straightforwardly, he told Chelo he suspected Gabe might have autism.

But that was impossible. I'd heard the word before but never really knew what it means. I thought autistics were people with special skills and talents, advanced, but who were otherwise retarded—like in that movie Rain Man, meant to order things. Little did I know that in many ways I was right.

Since we were living in Sacramento, the capital of California, where the state offices were located, we made an appointment to see the head of child psychological services for the state, Dr. Rose Hall.

Be sure as Hell sure Gabe and he would not look back or make eye contact with him, the doctor told to that in all likelihood Gabe had autism.

World crushing down

If you've never felt the world crushing down on you, Chelo and I did that fateful afternoon in 1989. Gabe was 3 years old then and in a few months he would be turning 4.

According to Hall, this was already a late age to diagnose a child with autism, but had we realized it sooner, it would be to our benefit. It would have been that much further. The earlier a child was diagnosed, he said, the easier it was to find or create a program to help him.

So Chelo and I huddled down to work—it was mainly Chelo, though I must admit, who did most of the work, as I was up at prospectors to get Gabriel so tools and as near normal as possible in the quickest time.

Gabe underwent a diagnostic program to ascertain his particular needs and where he could be placed in a special education class. Hall used a team of specialists taught us all about autism and trained us how to handle Gabe. In turn, we were to train the junior and senior psychology students who were to undergo their practicum working with Gabe under a state-sponsored system.

We read all the books, OK, Chelo also read them and I skimmed them (I was busy with them later). Through it all, we felt so alone, like we were the only parents in the world who had a son with autism.

Hall and others then introduced us to a support group of parents in similar straits and this was a big help. Together, in large measure, we could offer each other not only support but tips on where, what and how to get help for our children, as well as for ourselves.

Mainstreaming—best way

From the books we read and from talking to the other parents, we realized that mainstreaming (placing a child with a disability in a normal class setting) was the best way to treat a child with a disorder.

Children learn from their peers, more than from their teachers—about what is cool, how to dress and talk, the latest fads, etc.—and if one places a disabled child in a special school, then that one child would never would be the disabilities of the classmates.

Therefore, we insisted that Gabe be placed in a regular class in a regular public school. At first, we encountered resistance, especially from the district school supervisor at Elk Grove, a suburb of Sacramento and the city whose school district we belonged, living in South Sacramento.

But when the supervisor, who was against placing Gabe in a regular setting in the first place, heard the words: "We're going to sue you" from Chelo... when the supervisor asked us what we intended to do if she did not take Gabe into her classes... her whole attitude changed.

"Here, fill out these forms," the supervisor quickly told us.

So Gabe started school at Markofer Elementary in Elk Grove and his dad were along with him each day.

First of all, because he occasionally threw tantrums and exhibited physical aggression toward others and, secondly, at the time, the teachers at the regular school were not really equipped to handle a pupil like Gabe, so one condition for his acceptance into the mainstreaming program, and for Chelo's and my own peace of mind, one of us always went along to school with him, which was usually me.

Going to school

I took night jobs so I could go to school with Gabe in the daytime and Chelo took day jobs, in order to be with him at night.

So Gabe would go to regular classes in the morning until the early afternoon and later at home, at about 3 p.m., the University of California at Davis and California State University at Sacramento students would arrive to work with him the two to three hours.

Gabe therefore had a total of about eight hours of training every day, except weekends.

This resulted in huge strides in his development. We got Gabe to establish eye contact with people. His hand-eye and motor skills were coming along nicely.

We also took him to a private speech therapist to regain his ability to speak, understand and communicate clearly because we believed the key to his being made some normal or possible key to his ability to communicate, which he has (and) because limited.

All this of course was costing him the state of California and care of most of it, except for the private speech therapy that cost us $95 an hour but was well worth it.

'Music to my ears'

That is why parents of Filipino children with autism are amazed that Gabe can talk a mean streak, so much so that sometimes we have to tell him to "shut up," but deep down I always say to myself, "keep talking Gabe, it's music to my ears."

At Markofer, I went with the class when they went on field trips, usually to the local regional market, the fire station, the post office, to familiarize the kids with their neighborhood and at the same time teach them how to use the sidewalks and cross the streets properly.

Then Gabe went to John Edwards Elementary also in Elk Grove. At first-hit, I organized remote games (games I was different... just like you and me and everyone else a different from everyone else. In it were both ways—Gabe learned from them and they from him.

Chelo and I had always planned to return to the Philippines and not make America our permanent home, but wanted our children to grow up Filipino while at the same time giving them the choice of where to live in the future.

But with Gabe's condition, our plans changed. We decided to remain in America longer and learn and do as much as we could for Gabriel, and return to the Philippines later.

10 years behind

To our dismay we quickly learned when we came home that the Philippines was at least 10 years behind the United States in the United States when it came to treating and teaching kids with autism and other disabilities.

While we found through the Autism Society of the Philippines that many parents were serious about taking something for their children, there were also others who chose to keep them at home, away from the eyes of the public, perhaps out of shame, ignorance or guilt, or lack of resources.

In the Philippines, Gabe went to Montessori Filipino Child Research Center and St. Joseph's at Loyola Heights for the higher grades and high school. All these in a regular classroom setting.

But we also hired private nurses in between, like Becky Jackson and Edward Cainta, who went on to teach in New York and the British School at Bo'hai, respectively.

Gabe also took speech therapy at ISM Hospital and underwent water therapy with Coto de Gonzales Dwabagar City.

Today, Gabe is in second year college, taking up Library Science at Centro Escolar University. It's the only university in the country that caters to students with disabilities and Library Science is a course that is marketable, one, something that's easy for students with disabilities to learn, work and excel at.

We also retained the services of a private tutor three a week—Lolit B. Pamil, who is to her final year of graduate school specializing on children with disabilities.

Gabe loves going to school and his classmates naturally gravitate toward him, help him with his schoolwork and are protective of him. This is not only good for Gabe but also helps his classmates overcome any prejudices they may have against children with disabilities.

'He has a good eye'

Gabe has begun taking painting lessons and a brother-in-law who is a scene painter in the country told me one day, "He has a good eye."

Gabe learned to swim last summer at the Canada Swim School and even joined the competition against other swim schools. Although he came in last, over one minute behind the winner, he drew the most cheers from the audience.

Through it all, I went to school with Gabe. Of course, I was my classmate. (What child would want his mom or dad sitting next to him every day in the classroom?) I would stay in the background, in the corner, the library or not overtly in between, but I was always available in case a teacher had a question or a concern or I had a question about Gabe's homework or projects. Or in case he threw a tantrum, which happened less and less as he grew older and mellowed.

From Gabe, I learned humility, patience and understanding. I learned acceptance, that you can't always get what you want—and not to sweat the small stuff. That family is most important.

I learned that all people, no matter who they are, have their own problems and the answers lie within you. I learned to trust in the Supreme Being. Above all I learned unconditional love—the kind Gabe gives me and I him.

He made me grow up

I tell Gabe I love him first every night. And after we say our prayers together, he says "Good night, dad, I love you."

"Good night, Gabe, I love you, too!"

And there's quite literature of the genius, the late John Lennon who wrote in his last album, a song dedicated to his then little boy Sean, "Love you in the morning."

"I love you in the morning, dad," Gabe answers back.

Gabe has made me grow up. Truly, the child is father to the man.

GABE at 7 at John Edwards Elementary School.

'From Gabe, I learned humility, patience, acceptance, that you can't always get what you want—and not to sweat the small stuff. That family is most important.'

Greetings to the Muslim World

Happy New Year!

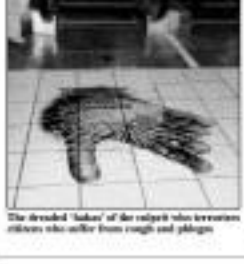
Amun Jadid 1428 H

Citizen Finds 'Bakas,' Wins P500,000

After months of searching, the elusive 'bakas' was finally found and the grand reward of P500,000 was given to Mr. Eduardo Taer of Caloocan City. For months Metro Manila citizens were tormented by a rash of rarest unlike any other.

This mark, or more fearfully referred to as the 'Bakas,' was found on the backs of anyone who was suffering from coughs and phlegm and didn't treat it correctly. Numerous 'Bakas' marks were found anywhere from malls, barangays, and even drug stores and television channels. The culprit, speculated to be a rampant gorilla, was captured temporarily by authorities. However, just a few days after its capture, the culprit escaped and is STILL AT LARGE, serving as a reminder for everyone to take their coughs seriously. In order to avoid being the next 'Bakas' victim, citizens are advised to take **CARBOCISTEINE SOLMUX** and take care of their cough and phlegm problems as early as possible.

After the shocking conclusion of the **Carbocisteine Solmux Hanapin ang Bakas Raffle Promo**, and the crowning of the grand prize winner of P500,000, the city is temporarily safe from the 'bakas' culprit. But as a word of caution, at the first signs of phlegm, use Carbocisteine Solmux to avoid being the next 'bakas' victim.



The dreaded 'bakas' of the culprit who terrorizes citizens who suffer from cough and phlegm

SPORTS

Lascuna settles for 14th place tie

Phone Pals, Barako nail semis slots

The PLDT Group congratulates the men and women behind the successful 12th ASEAN Summit held in Cebu.

As a Diamond Sponsor, the PLDT Group is proud to have partnered with the National Government in providing vital communication services and Internet connectivity for the 10 heads of state and 3,000 delegates, officials and media who attended the Summit.

PLDT fast tracked the deployment of Next Generation Network (NGN) facilities in Cebu in time for the ASEAN Summit. These state of the art high-speed telecommunications facilities provide landline telephones with broadband capabilities – voice, video and high-speed data.

At the Cebu International Convention Center (CICC), delegates and foreign media practitioners had access not only to telephone and Internet facilities, but also to high-quality international broadcast links to Asia, Europe and Australia through the facilities of Mabuhay Satellite.

Delegates and newsmen in SMART Bro Hotzones in the different venues had quick, easy broadband access to the Internet using their laptops. SMART also beefed up its 3G services to ensure always-on broadband connection even while on the go.

A SMART Bro on Mobile (SMART BroOM) – a mobile Internet cafe in a van – was also deployed for the use of the media.

"We are honored to have had the chance to do our share in hosting the 12th ASEAN Summit in Cebu," said PLDT and SMART president and CEO Napoleon L. Nazareno. "The entire PLDT Group joined hands to provide the Summit the required telecommunications support using our full range of products and services."

With the theme "One Caring and Sharing Community," the 12th ASEAN Summit has successfully steered ASEAN closer to realizing its vision of an ASEAN Community by 2020.

PLDT
SMART MABUHAY

PUREFOODS woman Jun Gimpat fouls Pau Cardona as the fiery Talk 'N Text guard attacks the basket in last night's game.

SERIES SCORECARD (Rosters: Cardenas)
• Game 1 — Star 90 def. Air21 86
• Game 2 — Talk 'N Text 104, Barangay Ginebra

By Marvin R. Castillo

RED BULL AND TALK 'N TEXT knocked out their foes last night and marched on to separate interesting semifinal series in the Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup.

The Bombo and the Phone Pals were unrelenting from the start as they ousted their first chance to advance opposite the elimination-round tapsee here.

Talk 'N Text got 23 points from Jhay Cardenas and 20 from Ato Ildefonso in a 119-96 victory over Purefoods, while Red Bull erected a 35-point lead in the half and then cruised to a 105-90 decision of Eric Lewis at the Cuneta Astrodome.

"Our game plan was to outlast Purefoods give up," said coach Boots Manuel after securing his first semifinal appearance in six years. "But that did not happen in the first half because Purefoods is such a tough team.

Statistically, Purefoods' last Final Four stint was in 2000 when it was coached by Jong Uichico.

Cardenas scored five points in the third period and Anthony Washington had 11 as the Phone Pals broke away with leads of as many as 16 points. Cardenas scored eight more in another run for a 104-87 advantage late in the fourth.

Washington went on to finish with 18 rebounds, while Harvey Carey, Ren-Ren Ritualo and Victor Pablo combined for another 38 points.

Purefoods, which came all the way back from a 1-0 down in the semifinals against Alaska before winning this tournament last season, played without Mars Pingris, Jo Custer, 1-boco who had a severe left ankle sprain.

Guadalupe Nov Cast Ebo also did not suit up because of a viral infection.

Talk 'N Text 119—Cardenas 23, Salmos 15, Washington 18, Carey 16, Ritualo 10, Pabo 10, Hidalgo 8, De Ocampo 0, Cruz 0, Arellano 0, Belgica 0.

PUREFOODS 96—Ildefonso 20, Dar. 3, Ilustre 11, Dionisio 9, Tenorio 11, Dumarpole 10, Salvador 5, Jumapilan 4, Ong 2, Yap, R. 2.

Quarters: 28-25, 51-43, 86-72, 119-96.

Second Game

RED BULL 105—Fonacier 14, Menkveren 13, Villanueva 13, Valenzuela 12, Reyes 11, Mamuyac 8, Mercado 8, Bagtas 7, Diamond, Cruz 3, Pinuela 2, Pedemonte 2.

STA. LUCIA 90—Gonzales 29, Bagtas 13, Arnaiz 13, Capacio 12, Lingcon 10, Villarosa 6, Calaguian 6, Mendoza 2, Cabagnot 0, Ong 0, Ng 0, Gill 0.

Quarters: 31-16, 53-33, 78-58, 105-90.

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Billboard victim's kin sue ad firm

By Tarra Quismundo

NEARLY FOUR MONTHS AFTER his death, the family of Felipe Gumapon has finally sued the ad company firm that put up the billboard that fell on the victim at the height of Typhoon "Milenyo" last Sept. 26, killing him instantly.

Charges of reckless imprudence resulting in homicide were filed on Friday against executives of the Manila-based JKJ Media Services Inc.

"It is a standard and logical practice for companies to be asked about during weather disturbances. The respondents failed to observe this practice," read the complaint filed by the Gumapon family at the Makati City Prosecutor's Office.

Gumapon, a 60-year-old driver working for Primapower Laundry and Dryclean Services, was killed when a billboard fell and crushed the company vehicle he was driving on Edsa's southbound side in Barangay Pinagkaisahan, Makati City on Sept. 28.

The billboard, which was installed on top of a building, toppled over at the height of strong winds brought by Milenyo which slammed directly into Metro Manila.

Aside from wrecking the van Gumapon was driving, the billboard also hit a car and a passenger bus, leaving several persons injured. Officials of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) who rushed to the scene said the billboard collapsed due to the typhoon's powerful winds.

But the Gumapon family disputed one's death could have been avoided had JKJ strictly implemented safety precautions while putting up the billboard's steel frame.

"The billboard was not aerodynamic ... the metal sheets ended up catching the wind instead of letting it slip through, and the entire display became a big, rigid surface against which the wind blew ... Its collapse in the fury of Typhoon 'Milenyo' was inevitable but it could have been averted," read the complaint, signed by Gumapon's son, Carmer.

Garcia added that the ad firm "ignored the dictum 'Typhoon Milenyo' posed to public safety and decided to let its huge commercial billboard ... remain as it" as the typhoon struck Metro Manila.

The Gumapons further alleged that based on photographs taken after the accident, the jail firm's steel billboard frame "was installed in violation of the specifications and provisions of the National Building Code and the National Structural Code for Buildings."

The two men acted but failed to control the billboard.

The Gumapon family claimed that the firm had offered to shoulder the burial expenses for Felipe but on the condition "that we desist from instituting criminal and/or civil proceedings against them."

"When we declined their offer, their lawyer scoffed at us and challenged my family to coin legal action ... We found this ... absolutely callous and uncalled for in light of the fact that we had just lost the paymaster of our family through their criminal negligence," the family said.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE? On her way to see the MV Doulos last weekend, INQUIRER contributor Ros Marquez-Abesco spotted this sign on a gate at Pier 13 in Manila's South Harbor. She named the following observation to Metro Citizen's Call: "The MV Doulos is an international floating book shop that brings knowledge, hope and help to developing countries. To show our appreciation for their years of meaningful service, the Philippines could only manage a recycled sign to give directions. Pretty embarrassing if you were waiting in line to see the books onboard along with hundreds of visitors that included children, students, foreign press and embassy personnel. Some thought it was funny to see our country's favorite name, 'Pinoy ako eh,' and a harbor employee's lazy handiwork displayed with pride on a gate. Others felt the Doulos deserved a little more respect. Instead of writing its name in a way that could suggest the ship has gone belly-up."

CALLING the attention of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority: Buses and jeepneys for last this corner of Ocean Boulevard and Mel Road into a shortcut, causing traffic gone every day.

—PERSON VILLA, Bacoor, Cavite

Zacharias Street in Old Balara, Quezon City used to be a squatters' colony until it was made an alternative route to Commonwealth Avenue (via Mindanao Avenue). Sadly, the people living in the area have made the sidewalks their parking spaces and the road their playground. This is at last way closed so you can just imagine how heavy traffic gets in the area.

—GRACIELA ZAVIERO, Capitol Hills, Quezon City

Here on Bagumbong Road, Caloocan City, there is no one managing traffic. The road is undergoing repair and carpeting work, and the one-way traffic scheme being implemented is a source of dismay and mayhem for motorists every day.

—JUN FAUSTINO, Bagumbong, Caloocan City

San Juan police told to 'shoot' residents

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

PEOPLE IN SAN JUAN LOITERING on the streets of San Juan from late in the afternoon until midnight should be prepared to have their picture taken.

The San Juan police has started implementing "Oplan Tambay Photo Shot"—a campaign aimed at netting up a "data base" of persons, mostly teenagers, frequenting streets and sidewalks in the small town from late in the afternoon to midnight, police chief Supt. Rodolfo Zoosa said yesterday.

"This is an effective crime deterrent because those persons will think twice before starting fights or figuring in vehicular mishaps," Zoosa also told the locators.

The strategy was launched to address the cases of brawls and physical injuries in the town which usually erupt between groups of teenagers and even adults, triggered by reasons as petty as one group feeling offended by a person in another group staring at them.

San Juan is small but it is surrounded by crowded urban poor communities in the nearby cities of Manila and Quezon, the police official said.

Under the project, policemen from the police community relations and the city mobile unit, armed with digital cameras, patrol key streets and take pictures of groups of bystanders, Zoosa explained.

People can refuse to have their pictures taken but Zoosa said the photographs will only be used for "verification and record purposes."

He said the scheme could also come in handy for parents looking for their missing children.

Bystanders in the town have been cooperative so far. Police have already moved over 100 group pictures in the last seven days—and most persons in the photographs were smiling, Jocosa added.

According to him, cases of physical injuries and street fights have also gone down after the scheme implementing the scheme although he could not back up his observation with any statistics.

Of the 21 barangays in the town, Zoosa said the incidents of physical injuries were most common in Barangays Sta. Lucia, Corazon de Jesus, St. Joseph, Salapan, San Perfecto, Batis, Kabayanan, Isabelita and Pedro Cruz.

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Pateros proud of 'suspended' barangay officials

By Julie M. Aurelio

IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF PATEROS, the officials of two barangays—Poblacion and Tabacalera—are literally "suspended."

For instead of being built on the ground, the barangay halls of the two are built above the street, just like a pedestrian overpass.

The Poblacion barangay hall is situated above the busy G. Flores Street. Folks described the one-story structure as the "hanging" or "suspended" barangay hall. It is supported by pillars straddling both sides of the street, allowing jeepneys, tricycles and even garbage trucks to pass underneath the building with ease.

Barangay Captain Eddie Reyes described the hall, completed in 1996, as the product of Pinoy ingenuity.

"Some barangays in our town are so poor that they cannot afford a piece of land for their own barangay hall. In fact, we used to rent a private hall," Poblacion Street solons we are up a hall for the community," he said.

In 1995, Reyes learned about barangay Epeng in Pasig, which had built a "suspended" barangay hall.

"The barangay didn't have a lot of to rent, so it thought. Why not build the hall above the street?" he said.

After consulting the members of the barangay Reyes and his kagawads passed a resolution asking the Pateros municipal government for permission to construct a barangay hall on C. Flores St., a street's throw away from the town's commercial area.

The simple, one-story structure was designed by architect Teodoro Santos, then the town's acting municipal engineer.

Its pillars support the weight of the hall while three beams support the foundation. Two flights of stairs lead to the structure which measures 10 sq m and has a vertical clearance of 16.5 feet.

Due to its location, visitors are always assured of a strong breeze no matter how close. From the balcony, one can see trucks the disappearing under the structure, only to come out at the other end of the street.

And everyone in the barangay however was convinced about the project.

"They said we couldn't possibly push through with the project. Some councilors claimed that we didn't have a project study, that there was no proper building process, that we didn't have clearance from the DPWH (Department of Public Works and Highways)," Reyes said.

Then Pateros Mayor Jose "Pepe" Cojuangco Jr., older brother of incumbent Mayor Imelda Cojuangco, however, was supportive of the project.

"The mayor really fought for this hall to be built. The councilors who opposed the project were charged as before the Ombudsman, but in the end the charges were dropped," Reyes said.

Work on the Poblacion barangay hall finally began in August 1994 but construction took nearly two years due to lack of funding.

The structure was finally inaugurated in January 1996. The total cost: around P600,000.

In March 1997, Reyes's brother-in-law, Rustico Garcia, the barangay captain of Tabacalera, decided to follow suit.

Like Reyes, Garcia used to hold office in a building on a rented lot.

"He saw that it could be done in Poblacion, so I thought, why not in my barangay?" he said.

It only took eight months for the Tabacalera barangay hall to be built, and without much opposition from local officials and residents. Erecting the structure cost them around P1.1 million.

By the end of 1997, Garcia was already receiving guests at his brand-new office which was situated above C. Senson Street.

Both halls are equipped with a lavatory, a toilet and offices for the kagawad, Kabataan and barangay secretaries.

Inspired by their example, other barangays with similar predicaments have also erected their own "hanging" halls: Barangay Sheltered in Ibong and Barangay Wawa in Taguig.

"Our old barangay office didn't even have running water and a restroom. It was really pitiful. The hall is a far cry from what we used to have," Reyes said, looking around his office with a fond eye.

BARANGAY Poblacion's "hanging hall" is located on G. Flores Street. Barangay residents say having such a structure can be both an advantage and a disadvantage. On the plus side, because of its unusual location, everybody knows where the barangay hall is located. On the down side, going to the barangay hall can be quite strenuous due to its two flights of stairs.

Ordinance filed on road safety in QC

By CJ Yap

BICYCLES, PEDICABS AND PUSHCARTS without taillights or reflectors are no longer welcome on Quezon City's thoroughfares at night.

In a move to prevent road accidents, city councilors have enacted an ordinance banning vehicles without motorized devices from plying the streets.

Under the ordinance, any resident who owns a nonmotor vehicle, such as a bicycles, pedicab or pushcart, shall be required to register the vehicle with the barangay chief.

They shall also be required to install a hammering device such as reflectors, taillights, reflector stickers, and even compact discs, which reflect light and catch people's attention in the dark.

The imminent vehicles shall be prohibited from plying the city highways and roads without the reflectors, according to the ordinance.

The measure also authorizes police officers, barangay officials and watchmen to confiscate and impound vehicles violating the ordinance.

The proponents said they want to curb road mishaps involving nonmotor vehicles, which tend to rise during nighttime.

Violations will carry a corresponding penalty. First-time offenders may claim their confiscated vehicle only upon payment of a P300 fine and presentation of reflector materials to be mounted on the vehicle.

Second offenders shall pay a P600 fine and be required to install the reflector on the vehicle, while third offenders shall be fined P1,000, or be moved a week-long jail term, or both, at the discretion of the court.

DID YOU KNOW

ON JAN. 22, 1987, exactly 20 years ago, 21 farmers were killed while more than 400 other people were wounded in what is now known as the Mendiola Massacre. The incident, however, is not the only violent clash between protesters and armed policemen in the area in recent memory. In August 1983, a group of undergraduate broke away from the funeral procession of former Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. and went to Mendiola Bridge (now Don Chino Roces Bridge). There they had a confrontation with the police, leading to the death of a student. The following month, people protesting Aquino's assassination clashed with troops positioned in Mendiola. Eleven died, most of them by gunfire. In May 2000, thousands of supposed President Joseph Estrada's supporters stormed Chino Roces Bridge on their way to Malacañang. The riot left four dead people and about 100 injured. —Cyril C. Arambulo, Inquirer Research

Costly day in Iraq for US: Crash, clash kill 20

BAGHDAD—U.S. forces suffered one of their costliest days in Iraq on Saturday when 20 troops were killed, including 13 in a helicopter and five in a clash in a Shiite holy city that the US military blamed on militiamen.

Two bombs kept up the pressure on Sunday. One killed six people on a bus in the center of Baghdad and the other, in the Sunni belt, killed one in the capital. The past week has seen a spike in bombings as the government prepares a crackdown in Baghdad.

The battle in a government building in Kerbala saw the bloodiest for US troops in the Shiite south in two years and occurred as Peter drew George W. Bush prepare leaders of the Shiite majority to crack down on militias from their community.

Hours after the loss of all 13 passengers and crew aboard a Black Hawk transport helicopter, the US military said five soldiers were killed and three wounded in the Kerbala clash. Two other soldiers were killed elsewhere, and the deaths of two killed on Friday were also announced.

It was unclear whether the helicopter was shot down.

Residents near Shapiko in violent Diyala province northeast of Baghdad said they saw a helicopter in flames in the air.

It was the deadliest day for US forces since Bush said 30 days ago he was sending about 20,000 more troops to Iraq to try to prevent sectarian civil war between Shiite Muslims and the once-dominant Sunni Arab minority. The plans have run into resistance from opposition Democrats who now control Congress.

The US Military said on Sunday a brigade of around 3,500 soldiers had arrived in Baghdad, the first of some 17,000 planned reinforcements for the city, and it would be fully operational by the start of February.

Thousands of pilgrims are thronging Karbala, 110 km south of Baghdad, at the start of the 10-day rite of Ashura, a highpoint of the Shiite calendar and a target before for attacks by al-Qaida and other Sunnis.

The Provincial Joint Coordination Center (PJCC) in Kerbala was attacked with grenades, small arms and indirect fires by an illegally armed militia group," the US Military said in a statement, apparently blaming Shiite militiamen rather than Sunni insurgents whom it usually refers to as "terrorists."

"The US soldiers were killed and three wounded while repelling the attack." It made no mention of attackers killed or detained and of funds did not immediately respond to queries on how the paramilitary identity was established.

Relations have become strained between Washington and the Shiite-led Iraqi government as the United States pursues Baghdad to rein in Shiite militias blamed for much equal killings and vow to limit the influence of Shiite Iran.

Nat since US troops fought street battles with the Mahdi Army of Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr in southern Iraq in 2004 have US forces had such heavy casualties in the region.

Still remains a potent force, both inside government Behind Shiite Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, where the Mahdi Army has been accused by Washington of being the greatest threat to Iraq.

Aides to Sadr accused Washington of trying to provoke a confrontation by arresting one of its spokespersons on Friday. Reuters

Turkey police arrest teen in editor slay

ISTANBUL, TURKEY—THE TURKISH POLICE on Saturday arrested a 17-year-old suspect in the killing of a newspaper editor who championed Armenian rights, Turkish authorities said.

The editor, Hrant Dink, 52, a Turk of Armenian descent, was shot Friday afternoon outside the office of his newspaper, Agos. A gunman was wounded by a surveillance camera security, and the police appealed to the public for help in identifying him.

On Saturday night, Ogun Samast was captured in Samsun, a Black Sea port, after his father recognized his images from the surveillance video and notified the police in Trabzon, their hometown, said Muammer Guler, Istanbul's governor, at a news conference just before midnight.

"The suspect was captured in Samsun on a passenger bus and on the Trabzon highway with all the evidence, including his gun and the white bone" seen in the video, Guler said.

Samast, an unemployed secondary school graduate who arrived in Istanbul several ago, admitted killing Dink, the Samsun police said.

The police are also looking into possible links between Samast and the killing of a Catholic priest, Andrea Santoro, last February. The assailant was a 16-year-old who, like the police said Samast, was from Trabzon.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan praised the efforts of the security forces Saturday and expressed satisfaction that an arrest had been made so quickly. Dink's friends on Monday "are going to continue investigations with the same determination," Erdogan told the reporters, assuring that the arrest was only the start.

Guler said at a news conference earlier Saturday that Samast had visited the Agos office on Friday. He appeared to be a supporter of Dink's, their hoping to meet Dink, whose notoriety told the young man he would receive an appointment.

The secretary later saw him loitering outside the office before Dink was attacked, Guler said.

Hacim Kiracoglu, head of the Istanbul Bar Association, noting that Samast and the killer of Santoro were underage, said that minors in Turkey are used in savings because they face lower penalties than an adult convicted of the same crime. NYT

JAPANESE FESTIVAL

Participants wearing the traditional "loincloth" or loincloth carry a "mikoshi" or portable shrine during the festival of Saidaiji Eyo at the Saidaiji temple early on the morning on the coast of the Seguni Bay in Fujisawa, south of Tokyo Jan. 11. This festival is part of Japan's Coming of Age Day celebrations and is a celebration of coming to the sea with the "mikoshi" or portable shrines.

Man survives fall from 17th floor of hotel

MINNEAPOLIS—A MAN CRASHED through a double-paned window in a hotel and plummeted 16 floors—but survived when he was caught by a roof overhang.

Joshua S. Hanson, 28, of Blaine, Minnesota, was taken to a hospital. Police and fire officials said he had multiple broken bones and internal injuries.

The man must have "an angel on his shoulder or something," said police Lt. Dale Sizemore. "He's a lucky guy."

According to a police report, Hanson and two friends returned home a night of drinking at about 1:30 a.m. Saturday. When the elevator reached the 17th floor, Hanson ran down a short hallway toward a floor-to-ceiling window, Sizemore said.

He apparently lost his balance and crashed through his glass, then fell 200 feet (58 meters), landing on the roof overhang one floor up from the street.

The window was double-paned and had a safety line, said Tom Hinton, general manager of the hotel.

Police said Hanson was conscious and communicating when he was taken off the overhang.

"It has never happened before," said Hinton, who added that hotel officials will investigate and take whatever steps to ensure the hotel's safety. AP

Colombia gov't ensnared in paramilitary scandal

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA—THE GOVERNment of President Alvaro Uribe, the largest recipient of American aid outside the Middle East, has found itself ensnared in a widening scandal as revelations surface of a secret alliance between some of the president's most prominent political supporters and paramilitary death squads.

Testimony this week from Salvatore Mancuso, a former paramilitary commander who ordered the cold-blooded killing of more than 300 people, as well as a document made public on Friday implicating more than a dozen politicians in the pact with paramilitaries, have injected fresh detail into a cocaine-fueling scandal that has stained Colombia's elite political class to its deepest extreme seeds.

Senior members of Uribe's government and Uribe himself have said that anyone shown to have had illegal ties to the paramilitaries, which terrorized Colombian cities and the countryside for the nation's internal war, which has gone on for decades, and made fortunes in cocaine trafficking, should be prosecuted to courts of law.

The scandal has already reached Uribe's Cabinet, with Jorge Alvaro Arias, the brother of Foreign Minister Maria Consuelo Araujo, under investigation for collaborating with militias.

"If there's someone involved at the highest level, they will be fired," Francisco Santos, Colombia's vice president, said in an interview. "Sovereign is free for us," Santos said. "This country needs to know the whole truth."

Some of the details coming to light about the breadth of paramilitary activities are the result of a process set in motion by Uribe's own government, which has allowed paramilitary leaders to confess their crimes and pay reparations in exchange for reduced sentences of no more than eight years in prison.

Though some militia leaders have balked at the deal, much of Colombia has been gripped by the first such confessions, that of Mancuso, a cashiered who claimed found the paramilitary movement in the 1980s in an effort to combat leftist guerrillas.

New York Times News Service

BOCHOM Prajang, right, is fed by a woman claiming to be her mother, Bochom Chhop, at their home Jan. 28, in Dyndao, Cambodia. Prajang went missing in 1998...in the age of eight.

'Father' of jungle woman willing to take DNA test

PHNOM PENH—THE RED who claims to be the father of a Cambodian woman thought to have spent 15 years living in the jungle said Sunday that he was willing to take a DNA test to prove it.

But Ken Lay, a village police officer and member of the Pnong ethnic minority, said it was more important for the woman to receive medical care and urged local and international donors to help.

"If possible I am willing to let her take a DNA test, but I don't think that's important because she is definitely my daughter. What we need now is to check her health instead of finding out whether she is mine," he said.

The mysterious woman was first spotted on Jan. 10, when the emerged naked from the jungles of Ratanakkiri, about 600 kilometers (400 miles) northeast of Phnom Penh, to steal food from a local farmer.

Sol Leo claims that she is his daughter Bochom Prajang, now 27, who went missing while herding water buffalo in 1998.

If she is indeed his daughter, no one knows what happened to her over the intervening ten decades.

Some fellow villagers doubt that she was truly living in the wild all that time, pointing to her well-trimmed hair and neat fingernails. AFP

Serbs vote in key election

BELGRADE, SERBIA—SERBS VOTED SUNday in general elections that could determine whether the troubled Balkan nation will continue with pro-Western reforms or retreat to its nationalist past.

The vote is the first since Serbia became independent last year with the breakup of its union with Montenegro. Shortly after the vote, a UN plan for the future of the Kosovo province is expected to be proposed.

More than 6.6 million voters will choose among 20 political parties, ranging from ultranationalist and conservatives to the pro-Western reformists and liberals. Pollsters mean neither a majority nor 5 percent of the vote to earn a place in the 250-member parliament.

Challenges facing the next parliament and government include handling the dispute over Kosovo's status, and Western demands for the arrest of war crimes fugitive Ratko Mladic.

Analysts predict no big changes in the economy. Through reforms since 2000 have helped Serbia recover, and in 2008 post 5.0 percent economic growth, unemployment is still high at around 14 percent, and the average monthly salary is around euro320 ($520).

Opinion polls have indicated the vote will be a close race between the nationalist Serbian Radical Party, loyal to late ex-leader Slobodan Milosevic, and the Western-backed Democratic Party of President Boris Tadic.

Neither of the two groups is expected to win an outright majority, however, forcing them to partner with smaller parties to form a coalition.

The Democratic Party is the main voice in the Kosovo Coalition, led by outgoing Prime Minister Kostunica, which would give the party a key advantage in deciding which of the two frontrunners to team up with for a majority to govern.

Though Kostunica's government has followed a pro-Western course, emphasizing reforms and fostering closer relations with the European Union, it has failed to meet the top Western demand of capturing and extraditing Mladic to the UN war crimes court in The Hague, Netherlands. AP

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Bolay, Capayan de Oro City
Regional Office 10

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Food Authority, Region 10 through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), hereby invites prospective bidders for the supply and delivery of the following items:

CONTRACT NO.	DESCRIPTION / NATURE OF WORK/GOOD	ESTIMATED COST/ABC IN PHILIPPINE PESO (PhP)	ORDERED QUANTITY OF GOODS/ NO. OF DAYS TO COMPLETE	DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF BIDS/ OPENING OF BIDS	BID SECURITY (PhP)	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (PhP)	BID SECURITY NOT LESS THAN THE CONTRACT (PhP)
1 lot	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
2 lot	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
3 lot	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
4 lot	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Prospective bidders should have completed, within the preceding 5 years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an equipment shall be understood as similar to the contract if the bidder has completed a contract involving the supply, delivery, installation and commissioning of the equipment. The Bidder must submit a valid Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License and registration for the Prospective Equipment or Bids shall not be considered "complete" unless. Post-qualification: If the bidder submitted the short list complete.

All qualifications will be on Eligibility Documents, Bid Security, Performance Security, Post-Bidding Documents, and Post-Qualification. Bidding Documents shall be issued to prospective bidders upon the payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of P[illegible] from [illegible] and shall be submitted on or before [illegible]. It may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) and the website of the Procuring Entity, provided that bidders shall pay the applicable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the submission of their bids.

The procurement schedule of activities is listed as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE	DATE	TIME
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	1. BAC to Regional Office Bolay, Cagayan de Oro City 2. Regional Office to Provincial Offices	January 15-16, 2009	8:00AM-5:00PM Working Days
2. Pre-bidding Conference	1. BAC to Regional Office Bolay, Cagayan de Oro City 2. Regional Office to Provincial Offices	January 19, 2009	1:30PM
3. Deadline for Submission and Receipt of Bids/ Opening of Bids/ Evaluation	1. BAC to Regional Office Bolay, Cagayan de Oro City 2. Regional Office to Provincial Offices	February 2, 2009	1:30PM
4. Opening of Bids	1. BAC to Regional Office Bolay, Cagayan de Oro City 2. Regional Office to Provincial Offices	February 2, 2009	1:30PM

The National Food Authority, Region 10 reserves its rights to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the bidder(s).

(Sgd.) CHARLITO S. MANTIHANI
BAC Chairman

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence K. Casiño

Vatican seeks dialogue, ties with China

VATICAN CITY—THE VATICAN HAS PLEDGED to pursue dialogue with the Chinese communist government aimed at establishing diplomatic ties, while Pope Benedict XVI is preparing a message for his suffering flock in China, where Catholics have sometimes been jailed or arrested for their loyalty to the pontiff.

A twofold strategy emerged [illegible] two days of high-level debate on China at the Vatican conference on religious freedom in China while pursuing normalization with Beijing.

Benedict, who called the [illegible] over attend the meeting in Saturday, received a detailed briefing on proposals made during what the Vatican described as frank debate.

Participants included Secretary of State Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, who is the pope's top aide, and leading prelates from China, among them Hong Kong Cardinal Joseph Zen, who is an outspoken advocate for freedom of worship.

Following the talks, Benedict "benevolently has decided to write a letter to Catholics in China," the Vatican said in a statement, without [illegible] when the letter might be issued.

Asia News, a Vatican-affiliated news agency, said that it was likely Benedict would "directly" take up specific questions or how to deal with illicit ordinations in the unsanctioned Catholic church, which does not accept papal authority.

Emerging from the discussions "was the will to continue on the journey of a respectful and constructive dialogue with the governing authorities, to overcome past difficulties," the Vatican said.

"In addition, the hope was expressed that a normalization of relations on various levels, with the aim of allowing the peaceful and fruitful life of the faith of the Church and of working together for the good of the Chinese people and peace in the world, would be achieved," it said.

Vatican officials said that "various levels" included diplomatic relations.

The Vatican has long indicated that it wants to establish diplomatic relations with Beijing, even at the cost of severing its embassy from Taiwan, but will not compromise on the tradition dictating that only the pope—and not a local church—can appoint bishops.

The Vatican has vigorously denounced Beijing's insistence on ordaining bishops without papal approval. Last month, Benedict expressed "great sorrow" over the latest such ordination, the third known case in 2006.

Zen has accused Beijing of reneging on a promise to stop the practice. China views papal appointments as interference in its internal affairs. AP

Castro battling for life—Chavez

RIO DE JANEIRO—ILL[illegible] CUBAN LEADER Fidel Castro is fighting for his life, his friend and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said.

"He's back in Santa Marenia and looked in a battle for his life," said Chavez, referring to Castro's legendary guerrilla war that toppled Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959 and ushered in the Cuban Revolution.

"There are those who want Fidel to die," Chavez said alluding to a recent Spanish press report that Castro, 80, was gravely ill following [illegible] operation.

"But I spoke to him a few days ago ... He trust he will recover completely," Chavez said.

Chavez has visited Castro and often speaks to him by telephone.

There has been mounting speculation over the condition of Castro, who has not been seen in public since being [illegible] in late July.

Last week, a US intelligence chief said Castro was terminally ill and might have only days to live.

"I don't know what he's going to do," said Chavez. "I hope he lives another 10 years, I hope he lives another 100 years, for Fidel Castro is one of those men who will never die." AFP

SAINT SEBASTIAN DAY

Two dancers celebrate Baile Bolsadan day in the city of Alcoy, Alicante, Spain, Jan. 20. The "Dance of San Bolsadan" takes place every Jan. 20 in Alcoy, and dates back 250 years. REUTERS

Pakistan intel accused of promoting Taliban

QUETTA, PAKISTAN—THE MOST EXPLOSive question about the Taliban resurgence blowing across the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan is this: does Pakistani intelligence agencies keep promoting the Islamic militancy?

The government of Pakistan vehemently rejects the allegation and insists that it is fully committed to helping US and Nato forces prevent the Taliban militants who were driven from power in Afghanistan in 2001.

But Islamist diplomats in both countries and Pakistani opposition figures say that Pakistan's intelligence agencies—in particular the powerful Inter-Services Intelligence and Military Intelligence—have been supporting militancy, sometimes motivated not only by Islamic fervor but also by a long-standing view that the Jihadist movement allows them to assert generic influence on Pakistan's vulnerable western flank.

More than two weeks of reporting along this frontier, including dozens of interviews with residents on each side of the porous border, leaves little doubt that Quetta is an important base for the Taliban. There are many signs that Pakistani authorities are encouraging the insurgents, if not sponsoring them.

The endeavor is provided in fearful whispers, and it is unrelated.

In Jamiat Islamiya, a religious school here in Quetta, Taliban sympathies are on flagrant display, and students say students have gone with their teachers' blessings to die in suicide bombings in Afghanistan.

Those families whose sons had died as suicide bombers in Afghanistan said they were afraid to talk about the deaths because of pressure from Pakistani intelligence agents. Local people say dozens of families have had sons die as suicide bombers and fighters in Afghanistan.

One former Taliban commander said in an interview that he had been [illegible] by Pakistani intelligence officials because he refused to go to Afghanistan to fight. He said that, for Pakistan, and local communities, his arrest had been killed, as part of Pakistan's crackdown on the Taliban in Pakistan. NYT

In California, a proposal to ban spanking

LOS ANGELES—AS A GENERAL RULE, [illegible] lawmakers [illegible] their attack on bills once they have actually been written. But not much proposed legislation involves the backsides of children.

A Democratic assemblywoman from Montana Vista says she will submit a bill next week—once it is drafted—proposing that California become the first state in the nation to make spanking of children 3 years old and under a misdemeanor. Repeaters could include child-rearing classes for offenders or one year in jail.

Just the mention of the bill has become a minor [illegible] in California, sparking denunciations from many Republican lawmakers (the state Senate minority leader, Dick Ackerman, declared, "Everyone to pick a word other than smug let me see, no will thought out."), heated debates among parents ("A bill should be passed to allow other parents to smack the parents of spoiled children," some said) and [illegible] (a staff reflection on behalf of the governor).

In an interview with The San Jose Mercury News, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said that as a child he "got smacked about everything. That was the way Austria worked."

The governor said that when disciplining his four children, he and his wife, Maria Shriver, declined to spank. "I think any time we try to just [illegible] you're going to protect the kids, it's, in general, always good," he added.

The bill's sponsor, Assemblywoman Sally J. Lieber, said that her office had been inundated with calls about the [illegible] of the proposed bill—which she will probably introduce next week—embraced. The majority of the calls, she contended, were against such legislation. NYT

WHAT'S INSIDE

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SPORTS

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Dumaguete gives up nat'l students loop, seeks unity

BAP Western Visayas regional director set to step down

NOT DASHBOARD
OVERSTRAINS YOUR AIRCON
DASHKILL

By Ted S. Malasdora

NEGROS ORIENTAL HAS DECIDED not to host the Basketball Association of the Philippines' National Students Tournament scheduled next month in Dumaguete City.

PANGILINAN: Unity Congress convener

Meanwhile, a key regional director from the Visayas is said to have given up on the BAP and is ready to join the rebel efforts of Santa Rosa Basketball ng Pilipinas (SRP).

The twin developments came on the heels of the BAP's firing of its own president, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, the outgoing Western Visayas spokesman Fifi Cuenca and the decision of the Visayas league to abandon the association in the past two weeks.

In giving up the hosting job, Glynda Dreza-Amat, co-chair of the Negros Oriental sports and cultural facilities management board, said they did not want to hamper the BAP's moves to unite all basketball groups in the country.

Negros Oriental Gov. George Arnaiz, the board's co-chair, approved the group's decision and its plan to send a representative to the SRP Unity Congress on Feb. 3 in Manila.

Ready to step down

The bayanan has also learned from reliable sources in the basketball community that Tata Agustin, the BAP regional director for Western Visayas, is ready to step down.

The sources said Agustin would join the congress to be presided over by barangay tycoon Manny V. Pangilinan, the SRP president.

The bayanan tried but failed to reach Agustin last night.

Agustin's resignation could trigger an "exodus of BAP officials in the provinces" to the SRP-run tournament, sources told.

Cuenca, the highest official so far to leave the BAP, said he would support the SRP's unity campaign.

The day after Estrada was fired last week, officials of the National Athletic Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (Nasscu) said they were holding the BAP in order to help promote Pangilinan's moves to unify all basketball groups in the country.

Nasscu president Dr. Jay Adalem said they expected most BAP member groups to join Pangilinan's unity call.

The SRP was created by a three-man panel composed of Pangilinan, former BAP president Jose Uy and then Philippine Basketball Association (Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas) chief Bernie Atienza based on a joint communique between the BAP and PBA to unite all major basketball stakeholders in a one-cage body.

Lifting of suspension

The agreement forged in Tokyo last year with the approval of Fiba, the international basketball federation, was one of the conditions the Fiba had set for the lifting of its suspension on the Philippines from international competition.

The BAP was not given inkness last week that it would hold the students' tournament this year in Dumaguete City—despite the absence of an agreement with Negros Oriental authorities.

"Graham [ex-BAP secretary general] earlier relayed [the message to host the tournament] to the governor [Arnaiz], who in turn relayed it to the board," said Dreza-Amat.

"We are also aware of the problems that beset Philippine basketball.....It may not be timely to host [the national students' tournament]."

Dreza-Amat said that due to the province's limited resources, the board "decided to prioritize" and would give up the chance to host the tournament, which the province also hosted last year.

"In the letter we have sent to... Graham [ex, we said] we are not saying that this is the end," Dreza-Amat said. "We are just saying that this time because we have other priorities .... But we are hoping that we will have a united stand in basketball."

Ramirez: President, Congress have last say on PSC changes

By Jane Nicasio

PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISSION chair William "Butch" Ramirez sees an orderly development in the proposed amendment on the appointment of officials in the government sports agency.

The bid to replace Ramirez and the blessing of President Aquino got nervous and the soul of Congress will be the decisive factors.

"The proposed amendment is good, but I think it [the approval] is still the prerogative of the Pasi dents," said Ramirez.

The Philippine Olympic Committee has filed, through Rep. Renato Usano Jr., a bill amending and upgrading Republic Act 6847, the law that created the PSC, the government sports agency.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr. announced during the recent PSC Awards Night that the bill seeks to give the Olympic body the power to recommend the PSC commissioners of its choice, among others, to maintain good ties between the two sports organizations.

Cojuangco also backed for a fixed tenure of the seven-list PSC commissioners to ensure continuity in the long-term program of the agency.

"If everybody agrees, then I don't see any issues, why it won't be passed," said Ramirez.

The proposed amendment also seeks to elevate the PSC to cabinet level so the chairman can bring the cause of sports to cabinet meetings.

The POC chief also sought additional sports funding from forestering and tax-free acquisition of equipment by the national sports associations.

HAPEE-PCU'S Jason Castro (left) disputes the rebound with Rookie Rain's Frederick Muhlach in a recent game. JUN MACAS

Crackshot boosts Hap Magnolia f

By Jasmine N. Payo

A PAIR OF RESURGENT PERFORMANCES came just in time for Hapee-PCU and Magnolia for Cream last week.

Displaying sensational scoring efforts, Jason Castro of Hapee-PCU and Stephen Dandalo of Magnolia for Cream powered their squads to crucial victories in the opening Wave Cup tournament of the Philippine Basketball League.

Castro's heroics propelled the Tenth Monarchs to a 3-2 card and a playoff for an outright semifinal berth while Dandalo kept the Fighting Mangos with a chance to reach the quarterfinals.

The two crackshots shared Player of the Week honors from the PBL scribes.

Dandalo, surpassing a previous best of 31 points, exploded early for numbers to lead Magnolia to a triple-overtime victory against Rookie Rain's GDL 129-128, last Saturday.

After unloading 14 points in the fourth quarter, the 5-foot-11 Dandalo also spent heated the charge in the three extra periods.

Two days earlier, Castro also cruised with 33 points as Hapee-PCU pass Cebuana Lhuillier in Orea Pardo in a 88-86 decision.

Banal stops Thai foe in ninth round, keeps streak

MANDAUE CITY—WORLD TITLE prospect Mick John Banal extended his unbeaten winning streak, stopping Thailand's Teerhan Jandaeng in the ninth round of their super flyweight bout here Saturday night.

The win improved the 19-year-old Bacolod native's slate to 11 wins, with

Banal of the M.A. Boxing Gym boxdazed Jandaeng despite a second-round gash due to an accidental clash of heads. It was blasting away in the unchained "Iron Mike" fashion Tony Boxing Gym Other fight in the clash.

RP Sts. 1 Synergis Rocky Fuentes won by unanimous decision over Greg Morgan while the unbeaten Mike Mikulo used a punching jab and power while body shots to beat Pablo Klaufa, also by unanimous decision.

Meanwhile, a clear win for Ilire Mamatsiqui earned him a consensus and victory after his opponent Aaron Okaro was given a standing knockdown count by referee Teddy Abbo and later declared unfit to continue.

Roberto L. Lagumbay contributor

BAP protest, a replay

Abolition Loma Kalaw Tiwi
Readers' Advocate
Philippine Daily Inquirer
Makati City, Metro Manila

Sir: Sarah Winblad's "Bare Eye"

Dear Sir/Ma'am/Miss:

Further to our letter of Jan. 8, 2007, relative to the blatant violations of the "Journalist's Code of Ethics" by Sarah Winblad, we are quoting hereunder his latest defamatory and malicious article, published in the Jan. 13, 2007 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer:

"Who Falls in Love with a Bedbug

"This is a chapter in the biography of a blood bedbug.

"Sen. Jinggoy Estrada on Monday forced a new fighting enemy.

"Bedbugs are the crushing "he detained.

"Of course, Mr. Senator, sir.

"Night honestly, the big one had stopped not was one of a kind.

"It doesn't only salon both and Lunch blood.

"The fun, irritating, pure fighters and nights, causing misery to the national basketball community, so as for cool only as the over national basketball scene.

"The thing has also proved shrinkly ready enough, unthinkable.

"After somehow tries to research it, the dirty big school again—new measure, worst menacing.

"Let me take care of him," Jinggoy, flashing a patriot's badge of courage, vowed before a function room packed with people who discussly care for Philippine basketball.

"The young lawmaker, in popping blank cash and red, the opponents ready to go to war.

"He had just been fired as president of the troublesome Basketball Association of the Philippines.

"Jinggoy, nevertheless, aims to be pressure to pass major basketball stakeholders and would-be his affiliation with the Senatbong Basketbol ng Pilipinas, a pioneering group headed by tycoon Manny Pangilinan which has been working diligently for the reformation of basketball in the Philippines.

"Jinggoy cleared up to fulfill a commitment, adding he came as a senator representing those who truly care for Philippine basketball.

* * *

"At the coffee shop of the Makati Shangri-La, Jinggoy later bared how his discredited BAP target Graham Lim had vehemently tried to dissuade him from coming to this unity effort.

"I would be worse to myself if I did not show up," Jinggoy told a small group of media people that joined him for coffee.

Bare Eye

Sarah Winblad

"Isn't Graham Lim no one-and-not more?" exclaimed R., a media person who helped foster people to thoughts.

"What's more to English? He was asked job right.

"Bedbug, what else?" It entered ers seriously.

"There was uncontrollable laughter around the table.

"Now, the Fibs should listen and act once we've seen these the beginning of this bedbug."

* * *

"A consensus was next reached: the best solution to the national basketball mess was to get rid of Graham Lim.

"For the record, Lim is a confirmed alien who had been deported but who has predictably remained in new dimensions among those who were wanting for unity in Philippine basketball.

"Jinggoy was asked what he planned to do with Graham Lim.

"The senator smiled and in another filtered

"Jinggoy's cellphone beeped.

"The first solution is communication," the senator mumbled while reading the text message.

"There was laughter again, followed by snickering silence among members of the small media group.

* * *

"Sir, there was no problem looking for a solution to the national basketball mess: get rid of the bedbug.

"But the bigger puzzle was how and why Graham Lim has been allowed to violate Philippine laws and in the most blatant manner the cases of those who have been discreetly working for the renascent of Philippine basketball.

"He must have somebody big behind him, it was suggested.

"Definitely not President Arroyo," Jinggoy remarked.

"Vicki Belmonte?" it suggested, explaining Graham's the past favoured FIBA father with a major conversation settled the Interior Ramon Ong.

"What about Freddie Johnson, FIBA's arm-in-arm who also was BAP president?"

"FIB did not like him, besides, Johnson is now silenced as an ambulance."

* * *

"Inevitably, the question of flooding—where Lim has been drawing all sustenance's cash—had

pair
pee,
ives

The reuniting campaign comes on an occasion for Filipino-PCU coach Jun Itiel since his eighty guard had been averaging around-but 13.9 points in the league, on top of 6.1 rebounds, 2.7 assists.

Torch Masters into a semifinals Mail and Others.

and Espeta Orlo, which both places as well, will tangle in

h matches will cool up in the e they will enjoy twice-to-

his reached only three wins ames, will take on Olbi next 1-41 in the second knockout

other headlines game are Heather Pete Pidala, h similar 4-0 records at the ation round.

...ts Like Pepsi', he could not ...gapped P. a full morning

...aching enemy had been dis- ...by this former DAP official, ...Ning for himself," suggested ...ther ...all the money to buy insul-

...Nilaan connection." ...e bank account to influence ...to Chico Mak, Alho-Anic re- ...ment"

...ly loves to nurture feelings,

...ame describes the Shangri- ...with Jingjing Simola like a ...d progress.

...ryonakers three more home- ...down. Heading partially tor- ...

...ons confederates.

...d the Philippines

ALCANO have elevated Japanese rank

Alcano, Lining gain All-Kansai quarters; Orcollo eliminated

BEIJING: WORLD POOL CHAMPION BONNIE Alcano and Antonio Lining crushed their respective rivals yesterday to reach the quarterfinals of the 17th Annual All-Kansai 9-Ball Open at the Ishig Sanwaw-Nihbetu Hall in Osaka, Japan.

The 34-year-old Alcano showed the form to topnotch Kazuhiro of Japan, 9-5, while Lining bounced out T. Fujimoto, 9-4, to remain in contention for the 1 million yen (P450,000) top prize in this tournament which sees the race-to-9, winner-breaks format.

Jeremy Orcollo, acknowledged as the Philippines' billiard's scoring game king, failed to advance after taking a 9-4 loss from Taiwanese Lo Li-wen.

Rumil Gallego and Rolando Garcia, the two other **Filipinos in the field, bowed out in the round of 32.** Gallego lost to Akano, 9-7, while Garcia took a 9-1 **thumping from Japan's T. Ono.**

Alcano, who topped his spectacular rise to the top of world pool by beating German ace Ralf Souquet in the WPC finals in Manila last November, will face Japan's T. Takase for a semifinal berth.

Formidable rival

But Lining will be up against a formidable rival in defending champion and tournament top seed Shunsuki Tanaka.

Takase advanced with a 9-5 win over S. Tsukeru while Tanaka downed Y. Shugetyama, 9-4.

The other quarterfinal pairings pit Taro against Heiko Yatsu-Gamez (5 ball-gold medal winner Satoshi Kawahara and E. Mizuhiko vs Lo Li-wen.

Yatsu advanced by beating Y. Kimura, 9-2, Kawahara whipped N. Ui, 9-3, and Mizushita outscored H. Arita, 9-2.

Alcano is hoping to improve on his quarterfinal finish in the 2006 Japan Cup in Fukuoka last month. *Marilou Bernardino, contributor*

Norway 9-ball: Gomez, Peña 1-2

ROBERTO GOMEZ DOWNED COMPATRIOT Ramon Peña, 9-3, in the finals to win the "The Battle of Scandinavia" 9-ball billiards tournament in Oslo, Norway over the weekend.

The 27-year-old Gomez defeated Britain's Darren Appleton, 9-5, in the semifinal round to avenge the all-Filipino clash with the 39-year-old Peña, who had earlier knocked out another British, Raj Mankal, by the same score.

Gomez and Peña, two of the rising stars of Bagay Promotion's panel of players, pocketed 3,000 euros (about P215,000) and 1,000 euros, respectively.

In the most lucrative 9-ball competition at the same venue, the Netherlands' Nick Feijen beat 17-year-old Ukrainian Artem Kolesnyy to the tune of the euro, 5-2, to claim the 15,000 euro champion's prize.

Marlon Bernardino, contributor

SPORTS

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AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Amelie goes; Serena up

MELBOURNE, Australia—Defending champion Amelie Mauresmo and No. 3 Svetlana Kuznetsova dropped out in shocking upsets Sunday, clearing the way for Serena Williams to make an unlikely run to the Australian Open final.

Seven-time Grand Slam champion Williams, who missed most of her season with a knee injury, showed glimpses of her peak form in a 6-3, 6-2 win over 13th-seeded Alona Bondarenko.

"It was absolutely sensational. I just play some of my best tennis here," said Williams, who had 31 winners and dropped seven only once. "It's on the right track ...I like being a dangerous floater."

Ninth-seeded rude Roddick beat No. 9 Nicolas Kiefer, 6-3, 7-5, 6-1, 3-7, 6-4, to set up a (next) quarterfinal against old friend and countryman Mardy Fish.

"I felt like we played at fourth and he had the cornerstones and was really being offensive in the points," Roddick said. "I knew that in fifth set, who or how, I had to turn the tables on the aggression. I was fortunate to get through."

The second-seeded Mauresmo dropped a 6-4, 6-3 decision to 70th-ranked Lucie Safarova, and Kuznetsova fell 6-4, 6-2 to Shahar Peer of Israel in the women's fourth round.

Williams made the quarterfinals at a major for the first time and faces one of the best in the game. Williams covered the court with more agility and boldness, despite pain she said was not her serious, like was the last of her major hurts in 2005.

ANDY Roddick, who earlier knocked out Marcos Baghdatis, bundles out Andy Murray. Above is a battle-of-big servers at the Australian Open.

Amel Jankovic was in form, cruising to Melbourne with a title at Auckland and a run to the finals at last world's Sydney International.

The unseeded Fish also made the last eight for the first time at a Grand Slam, beating No. 16 David Nalbandian 6-1, 7-6 (4), 2-6, 7-5, Fish lived with Roddick and his family for a year in 1999 and said the pair were like brothers.

In a post-match interview with former No. 1 Jim Courier, Roddick joked that Fish could repay the favor by losing the quarterfinal.

"I have a hard time thinking he's going to agree with it, but heck, I might as well propose it," Roddick said.

Mauresmo was up a service break early before slumping against Safarova, a 19-year-old Czech player who had only won one match in six previous Grand Slam tournaments.

"It's amazing. I still can't believe it," Safarova said. "I'm so happy. It's incredible."

It was Safarova's first time on center court at the Australian Open and her first match against Mauresmo.

"I came out this morning and said, 'Here this is a big court,'" But I felt really comfortable here," Safarova said.

She next plays fellow Czech Nicole Vaidisova, who beat seventh-seeded Elena Dementieva, 6-3, 6-3.

Safarova acknowledged her boyfriend—11th-seeded Tomas Berdych—also beat Dmitry Tursunov, 6-2, 6-2, 6-1, in a rain-delayed third-round match.

Hingis has had her Grand Slam break through last year in Melbourne, winning her first major title seven years after reaching her first final, also in the Australian Open. The 27-year-old Wimbledon champion of the Bratislava title and sports most of 2006 ranked No. 1.

In third-round matches delayed until Sunday by heavy rain, China's Li Na upset No. 9 Nicole Vaidisova, 6-2, 6-2. 13th-seeded Anna Chakvetadze beat Julia Goerges, 6-4, 6-4, and No. 15 Daniela Hantuchova edged Ashley Harkleroad, 6-7 (6), 7-5, 6-3.

AFP

DENVER'S JR Smith hangs on the rim after dunking the ball against the Houston Rockets in the second half. The Nuggets won, 125-113, in overtime.

Artest gets rude welcome in Detroit

DETROIT, MICHIGAN—RON ARTEST got a rude welcome on the court and from the fans Saturday upon his return to Detroit.

Artest was booed lustily by fans of the Detroit Pistons, who remember him from his tenure with the Indiana Pacers and the infamous 2004 brawl here when he sended into the stands to fight a beer thrown that hit him with a plastic full of Coke.

The Pistons trained Artest and his current teammates on the Sacramento Kings just as roughly as a 91-74 victory.

Artest was playing in Detroit for the first time since the Nov. 19, 2004 Pacers, which ended in a full-scale riot that became a huge black eye for the NBA.

With a history of erratic behavior, Artest was suspended for the rest of the season, missing 73 games. Artest later faced criminal charges but was sentenced to probation and community service.

He was traded to the Kings last season and did not play in Detroit at all.

Artest interacted with the crowd once, making a motion like he was shooting a ball toward the fans.

"What I had to do my community service, a couple friends that I met when I came to Detroit and, 'When you come into the game we're going to play cards,'" Artest said.

AFP

COMPLETE RESULTS (At Square 112, Manila): Rain Or Shine 108, Alaska 106 (Castelo 4-14, Alfaro 10, Dela Cruz 10, Yeng 0-0, Cruz 0-0, Ildefonso 0-0, Ayaay 0-0, Cortez 0-0, Ilagan 0-0, Ilagan 0-0, Ilagan

BUSINESS
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Gov't eyes T-bond offering for OFWs

Wants to raise $1.3B for infra projects

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO SELL AN EXCLUSIVE batch of retail treasury bonds (RTBs) to overseas Filipino workers within the year and use the proceeds to shore up its infrastructure spending.

In an infrastructure forum held by First Metro Investment Corp. and the University of Asia & the Pacific on Friday, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said the government was now drafting the mechanics of the proposed OFW issuance targeting OFWs and their families.

"It's being discussed by the Bureau of Internal Revenue in the context of infrastructure spending and financing," Guinigundo said.

"It can be [denominated in] pesos, dollars or euros depending on the demand from our OFWs," he said.

The Philippines needs to spend at least P1.7 trillion or 4.5 percent of its gross domestic product from 2006 to

GOV'T B2

IN THIS ISSUE

Ford set to sell more cars that run on biofuels /B4
Committed investments in 2006 hit P274B /B12

Politicking still worries businessmen

By Dexter L. Lucas

BUSINESSMEN REMAIN WORRIED OVER the negative influence that politics may have on the economy despite the government's impressive gains that year on the fiscal front.

At the same time, however, Makati Business Club (MBC) president Ramon R. del Rosario Jr. reasoned that the business community should not ignore the need for greater reforms in governance just because of recent positive developments.

"When things seem to be looking good, such as we have now, with the economy posting sustained growth and the financial markets trading with every bullish tone, there is a tendency for people to knock under issues of governance and accountability for fear of unsettling the situation and derailing the economy's and financial markets' positive momentum," he said.

Del Rosario made his comments in a forum on the country's 2007 prospects hosted by the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (Focap) in Makati City last Friday.

"The microtypical businessman, in particular, is viewed to be very reluctant to become proactively involved in demanding political accountability and good governance, particularly when business is doing well," he added.

However, he stressed that the MBC takes a longer term view in the "close interrelationship" between good governance and political accountability with the country's sustained economic progress.

POLITICKING B5

Stock index seen testing 3,100 mark

AS LOW AS P250 FAX REPAIR
OFFICE EQUIPMENTS REPAIR
ALL BRANDS, ALL MODELS
15%

A misunderstood agency

STRANGERS WHO RECOGNIZE ME FROM my past incarnation as a government official often think I was the secretary of DENR, not Neda, probably because the acronyms sound similar. In spite of its critical role in the governance, not very many Filipinos are aware of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

Even fewer people understand what Neda's role in the government is. Even Congress occasionally misidentified it as a "front-line agency" in a current token among its members in the 1990s. Not surprisingly, Neda tended to get the bottom-scrum of blame and criticism.

The Neda director general has a job that makes it virtually impossible to be popular among Cabinet peers, the politicians in Congress, local government officials, the donor community, the business sector, the NGOs, and yes, the president himself/herself.

In fact, I used to say that if you see Neda director general/manager to be popular with one or all of these groups, chances are you're not doing your job well. Being the head of an "oversight" agency means that the development planning agency is in the job of the accuracy of macroeconomic planning—the Cabinet role of the Neda DG—to poke his nose into every body else's business.

Playing God

An overall coordinator for crafting the six-year Medium Term Philippine Development Plan, it becomes incumbent on Neda to see to it that the various parts of the government do their part to ensure its twofold implementation. Thus, it constantly tends to sub other departments and agencies to provide information and data on how well they're doing their job, something they absolutely hate to do. It stops needing to look at the big picture. Neda often has to remind national departments and agencies that theirs is not necessarily the highest priority one. Or in the schemas of things. It's perilous to, practically all of them like to believe that this is the case, and resent it when they are likened to the "playing God." But then, someone has to play this thankless role if the government is to move as a team, instead of pulling in different directions. There has to be an effective team captain, more so without the power to enforce fully short in this critical task.

With its coordinating role, Neda is usually the chair or member of more than 400 inter-agency bodies, spanning the range from national policy-making bodies like the Monetary Board to minute-coordinator routine like the Inter-agency Committee on the Seeding Petal Colony. With so many committee and council meetings in attend or chair, the Neda DG spends the bulk of his office hours in endless meetings. The rest are spent in delivering speeches to an every topic under the sun, because being the overall development expert in the Cabinet, he is expected to speak with authority on anything ranging from fiscal and monetary policy to the trade of butterfly cultures to national development.

Too many questions

It's especially hard for Neda to be popular among government colleagues, politicians and private sector project proponents when it is constantly seen as standing in the way of getting their pet projects approved and funded by the donors. As head of the technical secretariat of the inter-agency Investment Coordination Committee (ICC) of the Neda Board, its job is to ensure that due diligence is conducted in evaluating the real fitness of all development projects vying for foreign assistance. And due diligence raises time, and more money to subject the project proponents to the scrutiny of the donor government agencies and agencies are reluctant, if not outright unwilling to provide the necessary information needed to do it. There can be various reasons for this, ranging from not having done the proper homework to not wanting to have to tell the truth about the true worth of the project and about its real beneficiaries. Neda is despised for "asking too many questions," "playing God," or causing "paralysis through analysis."

Accountable to all

As secretary of socioeconomic planning, the Neda DG is the only Cabinet member with no specific constituency. The same applies to the Neda regional directors in their respective regions. Neda DG and directors has to listen and be accountable to all sectors, not just to the business people, the agriculture secretary has farmers and agribusiness people, and the BSP governor has bankers for primary constituents, he has the entire Filipino citizenry to serve in equal measure. He must reconcile divergent interests and viewpoints, and with opportunity. That's why training in economics—the science of tradeoffs—is essential to the job. Thus, he can never make everybody happy all of the time. At one time or another, he will make a particular group unhappy. And sometimes people have long memories for what you do wrong and short memories for when you do right, he/something it makes new enemies practically every day he spends on the job.

He consistently has to issue unflattering reports on the economy, provided by the statistical agencies, and he is always pressured by the media to deny fully short in this critical task.

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Ignore

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Gov't eyes T-bond ...

From page B1

220.0 to fund the infrastructure requirements of the restructuring Agriculture financing and infrastructure monitoring role from that Arthur Yap noted during the same forum.

Based on BSP estimates, investments from OFWs—whether coursed through banks or other channels—could hit a new high of $13 billion this year.

Assuming a 10 percent savings rate among beneficiaries of OFW remittances, Guingona said there would be some $1.3 billion that could be tapped for government infrastructure financing.

Based on the BSP's earlier surveys among OFW households in Metro Manila, about 95 percent or nearly all of the households used part of the remittances to buy food and pay for other domestic expenditures.

Only 11 percent of these households attempt to invest in stocks or any private business but a larger 29 percent keep savings in banks and other depository institutions.

Guingona said the government has yet to finalize how much OFWs to issue but that finance Secretary Margarito Teves was very supportive of the proposed OFW offering.

Guingona said there would be a system of accreditation so investors eligible for the new RTB offering since it would cater exclusively to OFWs and their families.

He said the government was aware of the significant impact of OFW remittances on the economy as these inflows were now equivalent to about 10 percent of the country's gross domestic product and 66 percent of the BSP's foreign exchange reserves.

Through the years, OFW remittances have thus made the Philippine economy more resilient to shocks that could otherwise affect economic growth, inflation, external accounts and employment, in terms of employment, for instance, the ratio of jobless Filipinos would have doubled to 20 percent from the current 10 percent if all OFWs had remained in the country instead.

Stock ...

From page B1

"While inflation has remained tame, concerns of price pressures from the upcoming elections in May 2007 have solidified (stakes) investors for the CPI (consumer price index) outlook in 2007," the report added.

The overnight rate is used as a basis by banks for pricing their commercial loans and investors has a broad effect on the overall liquidity of the economy.

Apart from local interest rates, such market watchers are also looking at developments on the foreign exchange market. Darwin L. Lucas

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French bank sees continued peso rally

By Doris C. Dumlao

PEOPLE'S BANKERS: CHIEF DEP PHILIPPE H Indikit on the peso given the country's stable economic fundamentals, projecting the local currency to rally further toward the 46 level against the dollar by the second half of 2008.

Speaking before an information forum held by First Metro Investment Corp. and the Chamber of Banks of the Pacific on Friday, BNP Paribas chief economist and head of credit research for the Asia-Pacific Andrew Nova said they were expecting a "re-tes ing"—likely a reversal in credit rating upgrade from Standard & Poor's—after the May elections.

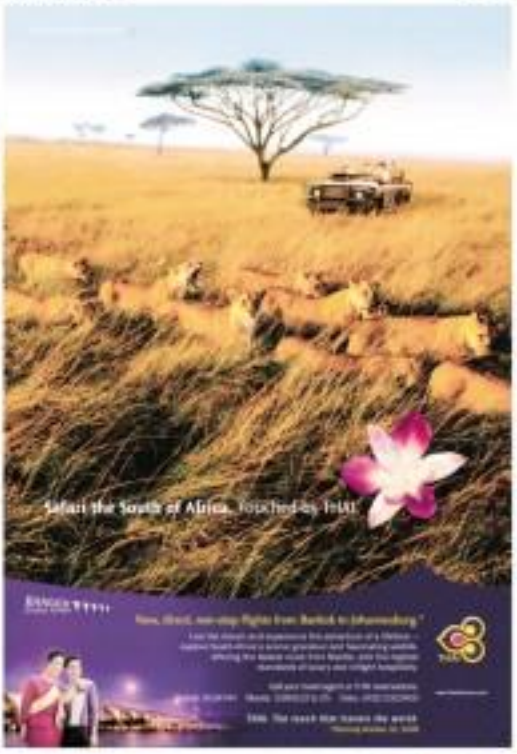
The Hong Kong-based economist had also forecast growth in real gross domestic product to pick up to 6 this year and 6.5 percent next year while inflation rate was expected to ease to 4.5 percent this year and 3.5 percent in 2008.

He said the peso would continue to appreciate against the dollar as foreign inflows were outpacing alongside the country's external trade balance.

BNP Paribas also was the peso having settled the 46 level within the first half of this year then breaking into the 47 level after the May elections. The local currency was projected to hit 47.56 by the third quarter and Fortune rise to 47 to the dollar by the last quarter of the year.

By the first quarter of 2008, Price projected that the peso would gain further against the dollar to hit 46.50 at the close quarter, 46 in the second quarter, 45.50 by the third quarter and 45 to a dollar by the fourth quarter.

"The external balances will support it," Indikit said. Summing up, GDP growth is going to be basically okay and the re-ratings coming from a substantial improvement in fiscal position will spell another cut in interest rates," Price said.



Ford set to sell more cars that run on biofuels

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL DEBUT(S) of its first-ford vehicles last year, Ford Group Philippines plans to eventually venture into the manufacture of vehicles that use other types of alternative fuels.

"Over the next few years, we'll manufacture other vehicles that use other alternative fuels. Right now, 20 percent of our total output is flex-fuel vehicles.

We'll [review] that to include other forms of alternative fuel technology," Ford Philippines president Jenny Go said in a briefing.

He said flex-fuel vehicles, however, would remain the "mainstays because we believe that's the most appropriate for the Philippines."

Apart from the Philippines, he said Ford also exported its flex-fuel vehicles to Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia. Completely knocked down units were also being shipped to Vietnam.

"But we hope to go beyond to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' market over time," he said.

Flex-fuel vehicles have single tanks, fuel systems and engines, but are designed to run on both unleaded gasoline and an alcohol-based fuel, usually ethanol.

American Iron and Steam Co. created the first such technology in the mid-1900s.

Ford, General Motors and Daimler-Chrysler all have flex-fuel vehicles.

Ford last year invested $20 million in a factory that produces flex-fuel vehicles in the Philippines, its first such facility in Asia.

Go said Ford was "happy" with the sales of its flex-fuel vehicles, "but we would do better."

The recent signing of the Biofuels Act of 2006 should help, he said, although the public still needed to be educated on the benefits of biofuels.

"We have to educate people on biofuel use. It's good for the economy, the environment, agriculture and energy security," he said.

Under the Biofuels Act, all diesel-fed vehicles should use a minimum 1-percent biodiesel blend within three months from the effectivity of the law.

Gasoline, on the other hand, should have at least a 5-percent ethanol blend within two years of the law's effectivity.

The mandated blend will rise to 2 percent for biodiesel after two years, and to at least 10 percent for bio-ethanol after four years.

Go said Ford's current flex-fuel vehicles, the Fuel Focus 1.8 and 2.0, could run on as much as a 20-percent ethanol blend.

GMO rice still in RP, says Greenpeace

By Clemence A. Gajilan

GREENPEACE PHILIPPINES HAS REVEALED that imported genetically modified rice was still being sold in supermarkets, two months after the group made public its discovery.

The Department of Agriculture has not done anything to confiscate the GE-tainted rice that are not allowed to be sold in supermarkets, the environmental activist group said.

Greenpeace said the Uncle Sam Texas Long Grain Rice "has tested positive for GMO contamination."

"The DA is fully aware of the US rice contamination scandal that affected global rice markets last year. But aside from merely issuing a statement that they will be checking future rice imports for GE contamination, they have not taken any steps to prevent the continued sale of this illicit product in the market," Greenpeace campaigner Jamel Ocampo pointed out.

In November, Greenpeace reported that the brand "Uncle Sam Texas Long Grain Rice," distributed by Pantheon Corp. of Sta. Cruz, Manila, was tested last year by an independent laboratory and was found positive for Bayer LL601.

Bayer's LL601 is rice genetically altered to survive the powerful herbicide glufosinate.

Greenpeace said it was field-tested under permits granted by the USDA (Department of Agriculture) from 1998 to 2001 but development was stopped by Bayer in 2001 for unclear reasons.

On July 21, 2006, Bayer informed the US DA of LL601 contamination in the food chain, but neither Bayer nor the USDA was able to tell how much rice was contaminated, which rice products were involved, or where the contaminated rice ended up.

Bayer LL601 is illegal (not approved for commercial distribution or human consumption) in any place in the world except the United States where the company applied for marketing approval only after it illegally contaminated the food chain, presumably to limit its legal liability for the episode, Ocampo said.

The widespread Bayer LL601 contamination scandal was the most significant demonstration of GE infection on a global scale last year.

The incident also prompted rice producers and exporters in the US, EU and Asia to commit to GMO-free production and trade.

Bacolod eyes new call centers

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY – THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT here is looking on the entry of more call centers to boost the city's economy.

Bacolod Mayor Evelio Leonardia said during the inauguration of Teleperformance, a call center company based in the United States, that the city government would continue to provide a business climate that would allow Teleperformance and other call centers to grow.

Teleperformance managing director Dave Slaney said the Bacolod call center has 300 employees.

"And, in 2008, we would love not hiring more than to be able to hire 500 more employees," he said.

The Bacolod Teleperformance call center currently services three Asian, Rim said.

One operator some of the largest customers

MONDAY B5

Getting elected now too expensive

CORRUPTION IS ROOTED ON THIS SIMPLE fact: Getting elected in this country has become too, too expensive.

I have someone who ran for a seat in the House of Representatives in 2005.

He spent a whopping P50 million—and lost. The winner probably spent P60 million.

For this May's elections, the tab has probably gone up a few notches.

Even to the less influence districts, a candidate for the House has to have a campaign budget of at least P2 million or more.

Big budget

If the districts has 30 or more, his total budget has to be P60 million, in order to have a fighting chance.

He should hope that his opponents does not have deeper pockets.

Darrel Gregorio wants to run for the Senate. How much does he need to mount a nationwide campaign?

If this were a presidential year, he can save some money by hitching rides with the presidential candidates.

Since this is a mid-term election, Darrel is on his own. My guess is he needs a campaign budget of at least P60 million.

Even candidates for party list representatives need a large budget.

The party list system was introduced to solve the marginalized and disadvantaged sectors—such as farmers, workers and women—to be represented in Congress.

Good return

But to win the maximum three seats a party requires a budget of at much as P30 million. As a result, communists front organizations, such as Bayan Muna and Anak Bayan, brazenly bankroll the revolutionary wages ransomed by the National People's Army (NPA) from the poorest, for their barrios, dominate the party list ranks.

The question is: Why? The reason is simple: The Liberal.

The lawmaker rakes a cut, at least 30 percent, of every public works project in his district handed by pork barrel.

If he is a party bigwig, he can get a bigger pork barrel than the rank and file lawmaker.

Running for a post in a local government has also become too expensive.

To run the mayor of Manila, the candidate will need at least P100 million.

To drive like Quezon City, Makati, Cebu and Davao, the budget is probably only slightly less.

A hundred million pesos is probably needed to run for governor in a major province like Pangasinan, Pampanga, or Cebu.

At the bottom of the scale are mini-provinces like Sarangani, Siliman Camiguin and Camotes.

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Florencio C. Gravoso

Even running for councilor has become too expensive.

I know someone who ran for councilor in a small town in the Visayas. He spent P500,000, all the money he could scrape up. He never had a chance.

Good investment

The investment game in the local governments is different.

The lucky winners count, not from public works projects, but from illegal activities, such as jueteng, smuggling and money laundering.

In turn, politics is an extremely good investment.

Oh, okay it is a dirty and corrupt investment, but, if the investor has the stomach for it, you have to admit the returns are most satisfying.

The tragedy, of course, is that, in the end, the taxpayer pays for all that graft and corruption.

And, unless, a way is found to cut election spending, let us forget about cleaning up. Dear send, let us discuss how we can cut election spending.?

Investment Funds of Pioneer Life Insurance Philippines	Pollution Date (01/01/07)	Valuation Date (01/01/07)
PELAC Dollar Bond Fund	1.3838	1.3621
PELAC Global Bond Fund	1.3886	1.3784
PELAC Peso Fixed Income Fund	1.0000	1.0000
PELAC Peso Equity Fund	1.3648	1.3383

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Politicking still worries . . . Point page B4

"We believe that, in the long run, sustained economic development that at least in some measure would and stronger business confidence and to liberate more Filipinos from poverty can be achieved only if we set a strong foundation for good governance that upholds and supports the implementation of both enlightened policies and meaningful and effective programs and projects," Del Rosario said.

The MNC is the umbrella organization of the country's biggest conglomerates and has been critical of many of the Arroyo administration's policies since 2006.

Del Rosario warned that the business community along with the rest of the country continued to suffer under inconsistent policymaking by the government, as evidenced by several "flip-flops" on several key issues.

"We are deeply bothered by the observation that the current administration seems to have become very comfortable with the idea of simply barreling through with their political initiatives and measures with very little regard to considered, sound, logical and rational assessments," he said.

Bacolod ... From page B4

ment parks in the world; one is a popular cellular phone manufacturer and the third is one of the world's largest semiconductor foundries.

The company had no difficulty finding employees in Bacolod City, Hilao said.

Four call centers are up shop in Bacolod City last year, several, ring in another dozen Batanga Hapa, chairperson of the Bacolod IT Focus Team.

aside from Sutherland, the others are Teletech, with more than 900 employees, Ecora Communications and ICI Asia, with more than 100 workers each.

CONDOMINIUM LIVING: Your cup of tea?

It's often said that buying a condominium is buying a lifestyle. What does it mean?

Condominium living is different from owning or renting a single dwelling, been house or apartment. Because condos have a dual "nature." Condominium owners hold title to their units and share responsibility for the operating costs of the balance of the property like common elements such as lobbies that makes up the condominium.

But condominiums are not everyone's cup of tea. Condominium corporations may set restrictions on such things as owning pets, or having an outdoor barbeque. Before you jump into the condo market with both feet, you should make sure that the condominium lifestyle is right for you.

Consider: though, the many advantages to condominium ownership, it may be less expensive than other types of home ownership. It can provide an "instant" sense of community. While someone else is cleaning the neighborhood canal, you can participate in community decision-making.

With bad traffic, fare and parking fee hikes, the need to be in proximity to your work and other places of interest is at its peak. Imagine the convenience of stepping down from your home to your office in less than the time it takes to get a cab. If you plan to be in the heart of the city where land is at premium, a condominium may be your best choice.

This is exactly what Adriatico Grand Realty Corporation had in mind when they planned and developed the Makati Adriatico Grand residences, a 30-Level (1016-Level) Residential Condominium, located at the heart of Makati, Manila. With today's ever changing lifestyle and working habits, it is essential to be in the city where everything is within your reach without the security and maintenance issues – how can you get more practical than that?" said Mr. Cesar Tan of AGRC. Excellent loft details make this development unique as it breathes in an airy but cozy ambiance to condo living.

An equally favorable project is the EDSA Grand Residences by EDSA Grand Realty Development Corporation. A 26-unit tower along EDSA cor Corregidor St., it is steps away from SM City North EDSA, MRT Station and other points of interest in Quezon City. Prepare to be impressed by its exceptional details that add reasonable to urban living.

Indeed, considering one's needs and lifestyle, may it be practicality or sophistication, determines whether condo living is truly your cup of tea.

To view comprehensive unit plans and other details, please visit www.adriaticogrand.com and www.edsagrand.com/

MPIC partners with Israeli firm for Subic-Clark-Tarlac highway bid

By Dante G. Lucas

PUBLICLY-LISTED METRO PACIFIC INVESTMENTS Corp. (MPIC) has enlisted the help of an Israeli firm experienced in toll road operations in its bid to operate and maintain the Subic-Clark-Tarlac expressway.

Speaking to reporters on Friday, MPIC president and CEO Jose Ma. Uy said they have entered into a joint venture partnership with the Africa Israel Investments Philippines Inc. in hopes in chances of winning the project.

"We're partnering with Africa Israel because they have a subsidiary that operates and maintains [toll roads]," he said, adding that the partnership would involve a 60-40 equity sharing scheme in favor of MPIC.

Uy said MPIC, a unit of the Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd., has already expressed its interest in the project to the Bases Conversion Development Authority.

"We're now ready to submit our prequalification package," he added.

So far, 12 companies have submitted letters of interest to bid on a 10-year contract to operate and maintain the P21-billion Subic-Clark-Tarlac expressway, according to the SCDA.

Apart from MPIC, the list included the Ayala group's trade finance management Corp., the Lopez group's First Philippine Holdings Corp., Midtown Alliance Resources Corp., JFC Landis International, Asiaphil Tollways Corp., Pacific Concrete Products, UEM Mare Philippines Corp., R.D. Policarpio & Co., EMA Infrastructure Development Corp., J.V. Angeles Construction Corp., and Pacific Builders Inc.

The contract will be awarded on March 21, intended for completion by the end of this year, the 93.77-kilometer toll segment of the Philippine-Japan Friendship Highway connecting Luzon region into a "super region" of economic growth.

It will cut travel time between the Subic Bay Freeport northwest of Manila and the Clark Special Economic Zone north of Manila to 30 minutes, and between Clark and the Alabang-Zapote industrial estate in southern Tarlac province to 28 minutes. At present, travel between these points takes as long as two hours.

BCDA president Narciso Abaya earlier said that the contract would cover toll collection and traffic management, roadway maintenance, general administration, and grooming and landscaping.

The BCDA has set a ceiling of 12.5 percent for the bidders' proposed share in toll collections.

Meanwhile, the MPIC chief said his firm was also interesting in the project to extend the Skyway elevated road system if the deal could be "structured to make it more feasible."

"Right now, the toll [rates] are too high, and the debt levels of the R[oad] are also very high," he said, adding that MPIC would need to see the toll concession extended over a longer distance southward for the project to be able to take advantage of economies of scale.

Awarding set on March 21

SM plans new shopping center in Cebu

By Irene R. Sim Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—Cebu could look forward to more investments to its retail sector as SM Prime Holdings disclosed plans to build another shopping center here.

In an interview, SM Prime president Hans T. Sy said the company was planning to build one or two additional shopping centers in Cebu.

"We are bullish about Cebu," Sy said.

SM Prime spends at least P1 billion to build just one shopping center, Sy said.

Sy was in Cebu Friday to attend the inauguration of the first roads around the 300-City Cebu that were repaired and improved out of the taxes advanced by the mall to the Cebu City government, and the unveiling of a huge billboard depicting the mall expansion called The Boardwalk.

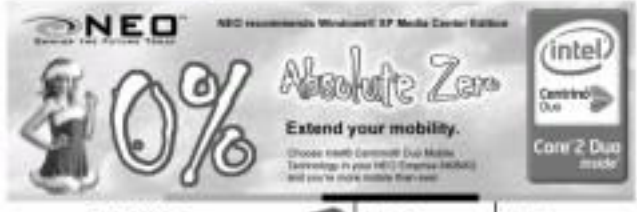
"Definitely, we're looking into a second and third location for a shopping center here in Cebu. We believe that Cebu is an area that we could still expand," Sy said.

While the company is interested in the South Road Properties (SRP), Cebu City's south reclamation project, SM Prime is also looking at other areas, he pointed out.

"It's still early. It's not but if the numbers are right we definitely will go into [putting up a shopping center in the SRP]," Sy said.

The price of the land near the Cebu City government's development plan would be among the basis for choosing the SRP as a shopping center site, he explained.

He said the additional malls would be in the 60,000 to 75,000 sq.m. size similar to the SM Supercenters.



GMA Network to get perks for ₱300-M venture

By Rommel W. Dionisio

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS APPROVED the granting of tax perks to GMA Network Inc.'s ₱300-million venture in the export of television programs and movies.

According to the BOI, the all-Filipino firm's venture would be wholly hosted with equity activities under the rest of broadcast equipment, program rights and working capital.

Expected to create 47 new jobs when fully operational, the project would be given a manpower waiver, which entitles the company to an income tax holiday of up to four years, duty-free importation of capital goods, and other fiscal and nonfiscal perks.

The TV programs and movies would be exported to international firms that provide direct-to-home and cable TV services.

The producer was pleased noting the digital Broadcast Automation System and are wanted via satellite uplink facilities for transmission.

Also, GMA Network would use a fully redundant multi-channel per carrier platform to transmit programs and movies on the Measat-3 satellite. Its transmission is received by local and international relays and cable affiliates for retransmission and redistribution in their systems.

The company has already identified buyers of its exports, including Comsats, DirecTV, Time Warner, Cablevision, Wave, San Bruno, Dish Visia, HDN Quezon, Charter IA, Cox Las Vegas, GO Alaska, and other service providers in the United States.

Products will also be sent to HCCM and Inflit in Hong Kong, Starhub in Singapore, UTA in Guam, as well as clients in Japan, Malaysia and Belgium.

Last year, the Department of Trade and Industry said it would actively promote the export of local TV shows, movies and music after Indonesian media outfit bought the rights to an fantasy series Intermezzo and Malaysia in the region's most populous nation.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila had said the interest shown by Indonesian media outlets to import Filipino TV programs showed that there was a very strong interest abroad for Philippine entertainment products.

Favila added that, in the case of Muslim-dominated Indonesia, the entertainment industry needed to be adaptive with content and presentation of exportable programs, considering the market's conservative nature.

Submarine cable system to boost RP telecom links

By Dainiel L. Lucas and Riza T. Olchondra

HONG KONG-BASED ASIA PACIFIC CABLE NETWORK (IAS) unveiled a plan to add a new trans-Pacific submarine cable system to its regional cable system in light of recent telecommunications difficulties caused by the Dec. 26, 2006 earthquake off Taiwan.

Dubbed IAC-Pacific, the new 20,000-kilometer infrastructure will extend the existing infrastructure with more trans-Pacific ring.

The project, expected to be completed by July 2008, consists of a northern route traversing Japan to the United States, and a southern route linking the Philippines to the U.S. via Guam and Hawaii.

IAC Pacific will also include a sub-sea link between the Philippines directly with Japan, which will close the ring design and integrate the trans-Pacific infrastructure with the current system.

In a press statement, Asia Netcom said that IAC Pacific has received committed funds of $200 million through its partners, investors and debt holders.

The system, which will use a new innovative optical structure that is hybrid of the "bi-directional" club cable and a "private cable" structure, will be operational in July 2008.

Asia Netcom will announce its landing partners for the system by April 2007, and will complete system selection by May 2007.

"In light of the recent events that followed the Boxing Day (Dec. 26) earthquake off the coast of southern Taiwan, there is clearly a need for more diversity between Asia and the US," Asia Netcom CEO Bill Barney said in his statement. "IAC Pacific is designed to enhance the connectivity options of the fast growing South Asian region and create a direct onward expressway for that region to connect to the US, as well as Japan and South Asia."

The new IAC Pacific system will feature four fiber pairs, each capable of supporting a minimum design capacity of 2.56 Terabits per second using 64-wavelength "dense wavelength division multiplexing" technology capable of transporting 10 Gigabits per second per wavelength.

Asia Netcom operates an extensive telecommunications network infrastructure in the Asia Pacific region, including a privately-owned sub-sea cable system, IDC, as well as extensive terrestrial backhaul and "value-bonus" resilient Asian markets.

The firm provides a portfolio of end-to-end connectivity, data communications and IP-based solutions and services to enterprise, ISP and carrier customers in the Asia Pacific region.

Spug urged to do its bit for tourism

$2-B Japan grant being eyed to fund small, micro hydropower projects

By Abigail L. Ho

THE SMALL POWER UTILITIES GROUP (Spug) of the National Power Corp. can help boost tourism in its covered areas by tapping Japan's $2-billion grant for East Asian economies and engaging in small and micro hydropower projects.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said undertaking small and micro hydropower projects in some of the country's small islands could help reduce electricity subsidies.

Right now, the islands that draw the most tourists are heavily dependent on generators using expensive bunker and diesel fuels, Lotilla said.

He proposed a shift to hydropower plants, if there are available water resources, "or even smaller coal-fired power plants."

Lotilla cited the case of Bantayan, where Napocor-Spug had already transferred to Bantayan Power Corporation (BPPC) the responsibility of supplying power to the island.

With BPPC providing power in Bantayan, power rates would be pegged at a rate of P6.99 per kilowatt hour (kWh), half the current rate of between P12 and P14 per kWh.

MPPC, a group composed of SH Bantayan and Inkochi Cold Network Philippines, would ensure reliable electricity supply in Madrian province all year round.

Under the terms of the agreement, MPPC would supply 32 megawatts (MW) of dependable power supply to Madrian, a significant jump from the 8 MW of electricity supply that residents currently enjoyed.

This 8-MW power supply was not even that reliable, as Madrian residents usually had to endure several hours of power outages each day.

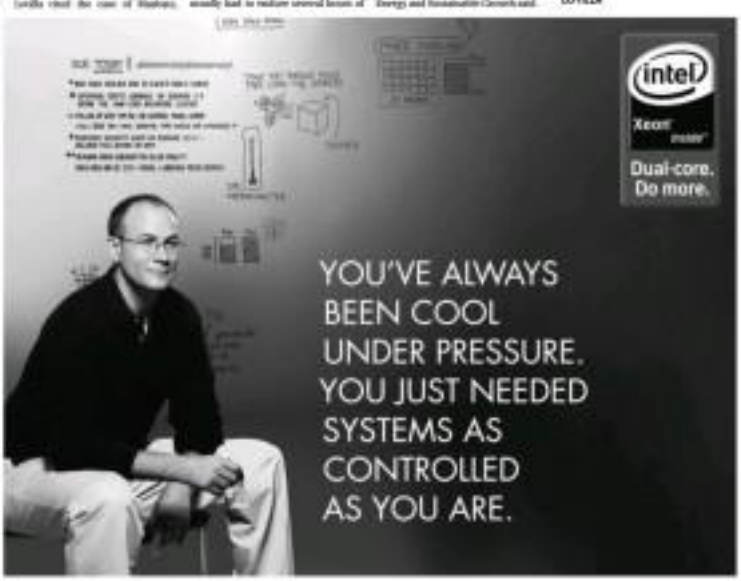
To undertake such projects, Lotilla said the country could draft proposals to be able to avail itself of grants from the Japanese government.

"The ability to tap this ($2-billion) grant is based on how we draft our project proposals," he said.

Japan has committed a $2-billion grant for energy-related projects, aimed at improving energy access, including electricity infrastructure and rural electrification, as well as energy efficiency and conservation.

"Initiatives will take into account socio-economic situations in each (East Asian) country's member country, in addition, investment loans of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation) will be actively utilized," the East Asia-Japan Cooperation Initiative for Clean Energy and Sustainable Growth said.

LOTILLA



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Mind-reading phones, 3D Internet shopping

IBM gives a peek of what to expect in next 5 years

By Abigail L. Ho

MIND-READING MOBILE PHONES, remote healthcare, automatic speech translation, 3D Internet and increasingly small gadgets—no, this isn't a glimpse into Star Trek universe or even the Marita parallel dimension.

According to computer giant IBM Corp., these are all innovations that will change the way people work, live and play in just the next five years.

IBM's Next Five in Five, a list based on market and societal trends as well as emerging technologies from IBM's Labs worldwide, does not lie in the next five years, the ubiquitous mobile phone would be able to "learn" users about its tastes.

"Advanced 'pervasive' technology will give mobile phones and (personal digital assistants) the ability to automatically learn about their users' idiosyncrasies and preferences as they consume, work and travel," IBM said.

"Pervasive" technology is currently used in instant messaging, which makes it possible to locate and identify a user as soon as he logs on to a network.

For years from now, IBM said most mobile devices would be better able to learn about and adapt to their users' preferences and needs.

Remote healthcare should also be more mainstream by 2012, allowing millions of people with chronic health problems such as diabetes, heart ailment, kidney or circulatory problems to have their conditions unceasingly monitored remotely.

"Device makers and healthcare professionals will take a proactive approach to ongoing remote monitoring of patients, delivered through sensors in the home, worn on the person or in devices and packaging," IBM said.

"These advances will also allow patients to better monitor their own health and help clinicians provide the ongoing preventive care regardless of a person's location," it added.

For frequent flyers, the next five years would also bring a welcome treat, as real-time speech translation becomes the norm.

IBM speech innovations currently allow PDA users to issue basic onscreen commands—as let media firms monitor Chinese and Arabic news broadcasts over the Web in English, and doctors communicate with patients in Spanish.

Such real-time translation technologies and services, IBM said, would be built into mobile phones, handheld devices and cars.

The Internet would also likely get a facelift in the next five years, IBM said. By then, the Internet would probably be 3D, allowing users to walk through supermarket or bookstore aisles when they shop online.

"The 3D Internet will enable users' blends of online content, remote medicine and consumer experiences, transforming how we interact with our friends, family, doctors, teachers, favorite stores, and more," IBM said.

Finally, as cattle robot is already happening now, devices will continue to become smaller and smarter, thanks to nanotechnology.

In the next five years, nanotechnology will be used in some Hitachi-like, effectively helping address the growing worldwide shortage of portable water.

This advancement will also impact advanced water modeling and improved solar power systems.

Filipinos find ways to make 'free' calls

By Rica T. Olchondra

MANY FILIPINOS CALL SOMEBODY using their mobile phone then hang up before the other party answers to avoid spending extra one peso on communication, said a study of grassroots cellular and fixed line use in five developing countries in Asia.

The LIRNEAsia study conducted through IC Strategy said about 8.72 million Filipinos are in the lowest socio-economic classes, and 4% percent of them just phone and hang up or "missed calls" to save on telecommunication costs.

The study said there was a general perception in the Philippines that telecommunications devices and services were expensive, so users have devised ways to save on rates, primarily through texting and, increasingly "missed calling", which was defined as the practice of calling and hanging up.

"Missed calls have come to have a sort of code between the people who use them to communicate. To some, one missed call could mean 'I'm home' or 'I've signed on to a different levels of airspace.' To some, it means 'Call me,' and even a romantic meaning such as 'I'm thinking of you,'" LIRNEAsia researcher Ayesha Zainudeen said.

Zoey Zapanta, a newspaper vendor, said she phones their bangs up as a signal that she has an urgent message but cannot afford to call, while income jute seller Rosey Colonia said he "missed calls" as a way of asking the recipient to send him phone credits.

Even their more well-off counterparts have their own uses for missed calls.

John Rocco, a techie-editor for an electronic daily, said he uses "missed calls" him to answer yes or no questions. "My sisters uses (the practice) to answer 'yes' when she's late on (prepaid) load. When there is no response, it means 'no,'" he said.

Rocco also said he phones three bangs up to check whether the cellular phone of a person who has not answered his text message was unavailable or out of the coverage area.

Vanessa Javier, site support officer for eWorkers, said she "missed calls" someone she just sent a text message to, just for emphasis.

The LIRNEAsia study, called "Internet on a Shoestring 2: A study of telecom use at the bottom of the pyramid in Asia," also revealed that about 75 percent of the poorest Filipinos find texts—or, across a phone, such as the mobile phone of a household member or even a friend who lives in another household.

The study also found that those with cellular phones spend about $1 a month on services, which include voice calls and text messaging, and that users who possess P1k spent more to buy a mobile phone within the next two years.

In the meantime, the cost barrier to owning a cellular phone has driven the increasing use of second-hand mobile handsets, prepaid services and text messaging, which are the average Filipino does at least once a day.

The study involved face-to-face interviews with 3,602 respondents, ages 15 to 60 years in 2006. The study covered five countries, including India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Thailand. Of the total survey samples, 1,200 respondents came from the Philippines.

LIRNEAsia is regional, non-profit ICT policy and regulation capacity-building organization currently funded primarily by the International Development Research Centre of Canada. Additional information is available at www.lirneasia.net.

TO PERCENT of the poorest Filipinos find ways to access a phone.

Japan PlayStation 3 shipments hit 1M

TOKYO—SHIPMENTS IN JAPAN OF the new PlayStation 3 video game machines reached 1 million Tuesday, Sony said, hitting the company's target about two weeks behind schedule.

Sony had planned to ship 2 million PlayStation 3 machines around the world by the end of last year. Last week, Tokyo-based Sony Corp. said it met its shipping targets of 1 million PS3 consoles in the United States in 2006.

It predicted ongoing supplies of machine domestically during the same period, but speculation had been growing that PS3 sales may be faltering in Japan.

Sony Computer Entertainment brushed off such worries, saying in Tuesday's press release that a 2-million shipment of 2 million reached within about two months after a marketers launch is the fastest pace for any game console ever put out by the company.

Masayuki Dozai, deputy chief of research at Nomura Securities, said PS3 sales were struggling in Japan with errors such beginning at retailers. And the number of units shipped from Sony doesn't equal the total units sold at retailers, he said.

"The launch has a lot of problems, but Sony couldn't pick up with time," Ozaji said.

Sony Computer Entertainment spokeswoman Sanako Kato acknowledged shipments had slipped behind schedule. But she said the company was on schedule to meet plans for global shipments of 6 million PS3 machines by Mar. 31.

It was more important to have enough machines by year-end in the US because of the critical importance of Christmas shopping there, Kato said. Japan sales continue to be strong during the New Year because children receive holiday allowances.

Playstation 3 sales were expected to be strong in coming months because of the expected release of new game software in the weeks, several reports from's game said.

PlayStation 3, which has been delayed twice, went on sale in Japan and the US late last year. It is set to go on sale in Europe in March.

The relative lack of games to play on PS3 so far has added to concerns about the machine's prospects at a time when the Wii console from Japanese rival Nintendo Co., which includes Pokemon and Super Mario games, has been a surprise hit.

The Wii, which comes with a wand-like remote controller, competed against PlayStation 3 during the critical Christmas shopping season.

Nintendo is also targeting ship-ment of 6 million for its Wii machines by the end of the fiscal year through March. A major appeal of Wii is its cheaper price at about US$250, while PS3 costs US$500 and US$600.

The success of the PlayStation 3 is critical for Sony as it tackles a turnaround after suffering a big slump in its core electronics sector in recent years.

The PS3 supports Blu-ray (Blu-ray Disc), next-generation video, release survival is expected to encourage sales of new gadgets.

Ozaji, the analyst, said most consumers will don't have the latest TV models that will allow players to fully appreciate the spectacular image capacity offered on the PS3.

"Nintendo should be declaring victory," he said.

But Hirohisa Hanamura, president of Japanese game publisher Infobrain Inc., said PS3 was doing OK, and it only looked bad because of the softer popularity of the Wii. PS3 sales are running at about 85 percent of the inventory, in contrast to 100 percent for Wii, he said.

"Sony product selling at about 85 percent can be considered a hit," said Hanamura said.

Sales of PS3 could pick up in coming months, but it's uncertain whether Sony will be able to meet the 6 million global shipment target for fiscal 2006, as sales are lagging behind the initial company plan, Hanamura said.

Sony shares ended 6.2 percent lower in Tokyo at 5,899 yen ($47, 35 cents). AP

THIS PLAYSTATION 3 went on sale in Japan and is for US late last year. It is set to go on sale in Europe in March.

Yahoo launches personal money management website

SAN FRANCISCO—YAHOO launched a money management website on Friday, vying with rival Internet search giants to be the preferred place for people to do their online financial planning.

Yahoo Personal Finance features nine "resource centers" devoted to topics such as banking, budgeting, taxes, colleges and retirement.

Featuring information from Consumer Reports, the Wall Street Journal, Smart Money and CNNMoney.com, the site, http://finance.yahoo.com/personal-finance, also has a variety of financial planning and stories of programs to calculate long-range costs or investments, such as loan payments and retirement funds.

Yahoo also linked the website to its popular Answers forum, which taps into the wisdom of million users worldwide for replies to questions.

The personal finance website is free for users, with the Sunnyvale, California-based search engine aiming to reap revenue from advertisers interested in targeting people researching important money matters.

Yahoo has long featured a finance website with information and tools for people managing assets or investing in stocks or bonds.

Yahoo Finance has analysis and management tools as well as message boards, stock charts, brokerage reports and streaming stock quotes.

Online search colossus Google said last week it is working with US regulators and the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) to arrange to stream real-time stock prices to users of Google Finance and some of its other properties.

"The more up-to-date the information, the more valuable it is," Google product manager Katie Aoshi-Stamos wrote in a message on the Mountain View, California-company's website.

"What's really important is getting less, easy and fast access to real-time quotes so you know how the market or your company is doing now, not as of 20 minutes ago," she said.

Google said it planned to stream the NYSE sending information free to people's mobile devices.

"It won't matter if you're on Wall Street or Main Street—you'll have free, easy and fast access to real-time prices from NYSE on Google," Stamos wrote.

Microsoft offers financial planning, investing and stock resources along with advice and other money management tools at its MSN Money website.

The non-descriptive rivals were seeking to bolster their search finances by widening the amount of online users whose visits can be converted into advertising revenues. AFP

People, Events & Products

John Arles Espinosa

Free lay forum on heart risk factors

A LAY FORUM ON LIFE-THREATENing conditions that complicate hypertension, diabetes and cholesterol problems, or dyslipidemia, will be the kick-off activity for the 12th Asian Annual Convention of the Philippine Society of Hypertension (PSH) and the Philippine Lipid and Atherosclerosis Society (PLAS).

Renowned local experts will serve as resource persons for the lay forum, which is scheduled on Jan. 28, Sunday from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Function Room Sapphire A and B, Crowne Plaza Galleria (Shaista Okaie) in Ortigas, Pasig City.

It is a pre-convention activity and part of a series of public education campaigns conducted by PSH and PLAS as both organizations pursue programs to assist in controlling the upsurge of cardiovascular diseases, which remain as the country's top cause of deaths.

All the major risk factors, including high blood pressure, cholesterol problems, obesity, smoking and stress will be tackled by a panel of selected medical experts who will give short lectures followed by an interactive question-and-answer session with all lay participants. Practical tips will be given on how to control these risk factors and prevent heart attacks and strokes particularly in those who are at risk.

The expert panel includes Dr. Nelson Alejandro, PSH president, Dr. Ireneo Ong, PLAS president, Dr. Jose Bayona, Nely Velando-Ita, cesarean-mom, and Napoleon Caballero, a physical therapist. The overall coordinator of the forum is Dr. Rosa Alfaro Ita.

The forum is open to the public for free but due to limited seats, advance registration is required. For inquiries and registration, call the PSH-PLAS secretariat at 687-7873 or 687-2841. Deadline for registration is Jan. 21.

SECURITY BANK, TRENDS AND TECHNOLOGIES INK DEAL

Security Bank Corp. one of the country's top private commercial banks, recently inked a deal with Trends and Technologies Inc., the leading solutions provider for ICT in the Philippines, for a state of the art electronic security system in its new corporate headquarters currently under construction. Trends put Technologies will integrate Security Bank's entire LAN/WAN infrastructure to provide Cisco solutions. Shown here signing the agreement are (first and 3rd from left) Hasan Fard, chief and CEO, Trends and Technologies Inc. and Jesus Hernandez, senior vice president, Security Bank. Witnessing the contract signing are (from left) Lanie Dalisay, country manager, Cisco Systems Philippines; Belen Lim, senior vice president, Security Bank; and Bambi Yu, first vice president, Security Bank.

UNICEF'S SOWC 2007 REPORT LAUNCHED

The United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), in cooperation with the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCFRW), recently launched the State of the World's Children (SOWC) 2007 Report in Cebu City. This flagship report from Unicef examines the empowerment that women face throughout their lives and outlines what must be done to eliminate gender discrimination and empower women and girls. Shown holding a copy of the report are (from left) Gina Perdoles, Unicef Section Chief for Communication; Lt. Melbelou Arpon, Unicef Country Representative Anupama Rao Singh; United Regional Director for Eastasia and the Pacific, Marta Pac; NCFRW Chairperson; and Lieselotte Bautista, NCFRW Executive Director.

PNB, Gawad Kalinga team up vs RP poverty

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK (PNB) recently forged a historic partnership with non-government organization Gawad Kalinga (GK) to provide donations of property, financial assistance, and valuable human resource towards the building of Gawad Kalinga communities all over the country.

GK employs a holistic, integrated, and sustainable solution to community-building by alleviating poverty particularly through the planning and construction of decent homes. It is estimated that one-third of the entire Philippine population is comprised of squatters or slum-dwellers.

Previous GK partnerships with corporations, groups, and individuals have used virtual love often involved financial donations to fund the building of homes and other community facilities. Local government units and private individuals have been doing their part by providing land on which to build homes.

PNB is set to respond with a corporate approach that will harness the deep-rooted Filipino value of bayanihan through the bank's 5,700 employees in more than 350 branches nationwide, from Batanes Island to Jolo. PNB also committed to empower 100 of its clients annually to promote Gawad Kalinga's worldwide.

PNB's unique involvement as one corporate family will provide another step to addressing the problem of homelessness. The partnership with GK is expected to contribute to the work of Gawad Kalinga to reach its target of building 700,000 homes in 7,000 communities in seven years.

PNB PRESIDENT and CEO Jesus Ayson Aber (center) poses with Gawad Kalinga executive director Antonio Meloto (2nd from left) following their MOA signing at the PNB Financial Center. With them are PNB EVP Ramon Lee (2nd from right), PNB SVP Christian Jerome Bohol (right), and Gawad Kalinga national coordinator Luis Gasilloan.

1st 'White Suite' at Bayview Park Hotel

EXPERIENCE THE "WHITE Suite" Rekindle your romance and be reunited. Bayview Park Hotel, "your home by the bay", launches the most ambitious Suite Haven.

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For only P6, 000++ for an overnight stay for two, enjoy these amenities: a buffet breakfast for two at the Lobby Lounge, welcome fruit basket, and a bottle of wine at turn-down service.

Call 526-1111 local 1710/1707/1727 or 525-0919 for more information, e-mail reservation@bayviewparkhotel.com. Bayview Park Hotel is located at 1118 Roxas Boulevard corner Ofi Avenue, Manila.

CLOSE ONE WITH TAYTAY TOGA

Globe Telecom pursues its commitment to help build communities as it recently partnered with the municipality of Taytay and its engaged network of import exporters and artisans association Taytay Ang Maghahabang Samahang mga Magkakayari (TAYAMA or Taytay Artisans Multipurpose Association) for a livelihood program that will benefit not only the Taytay artisans and their families but also the different sectors in the community. Aside from providing the Maghahabang artisans tools and "karabaks" drivers, even also gives stakeholdership of Globe and Smart Mobile (TM) products and services to the people's Toda, call cards, and Personal 900 Prepaid Cards as settlement source of income. Globe also provided their family members with livelihood seminars through its corporate social responsibility (CSR) program Bridging Communities (Globe Bridge Cares) in order to promote starting small businesses. Some of these seminars are entrepreneurship development seminars that were offered focused on beauty and wellness business. Shown is Taytay Mayor George Ricardo "Joric" Garcia II (4th from left) sealing the partnership with Globe representative Benigno Lanza, from the sales division of consumer business group (2nd from left), while Globe's Mel Pargat (in Toga), Taytay Councilor Virgie Gonzaga, and Bagbahan Federation president Carlos Garcia look on.

PRSP announces 2007-2008 officers

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS Society of the Philippines (PRSP), in the recently concluded organizational meeting of its board of directors, has announced its new set of officers for 2007-2008. Elected as president is GMA Network's Raoh Raquel, APR, while ABS-CBN Communications's Ed Alkuino, APR and San Miguel's Mon Sumilang go assume the VP for internal and VP for external posts respectively.

Other newly elected PRSP officers are Total's Mylene Espina (secretary), Asian Development Bank's Sira Fenix, APR (treasurer) and Land Bank of the Philippines' Joy Rosales (internal auditor). Re-inducting Flair Publications, Manila Bulletin's Bambi Arienza and Manila's Star Rosquillo, APR completes the board's composition.

Immediate past PRSP president Mike de Quiroz of Full Circle Communications is ex officio director. Advisers on the board are past presidents Maximo Salvador, APR, Elpi Cuna, APR, Honorio Ichiro, APR and Cherie Agsaoy, APR.

For the term, PRSP has also named as new chairs of committees Imelda Ranch Raquel (accreditation and ethics); Josie Soliman (Gawad Award); Rita Benito (Finance), Mabuo Ikuina (membership); Milbert de Quiroz and Globe Telecom's Jones Constipo (program); Mon Santiago (publicity); Nely Rosales (student affairs); Serbin Ariston (PR Congress); and Ritzi Rosquillo (professional development seminar).

The newly elected officers will be formally inducted at the Awards Night scheduled Feb. 23.

RAQUEL

Grand takeoff for Nestlé Koko Krunch Jets Academy

THE KIDS GAME IN CROSS AND THEIR EXcitement levels soared sore heights. The second weekend of 2007 saw kids converging on the Market! Market! to join in the fun of Nestle Koko Krunch Jets Academy.

Adventure was the order of the day as kids hopped from booth to booth, plunging into the exhilarating activities. Among the favorite hurdles was Chip's Air Escape a Zip Line jump that let kids navigating from a real plane. This is where the kids met Chip the bear and zipped from one plane to another. Another hurdle was Captain Stars Flight Simulator, the ultimate pilot trainee's challenge, which saw the kids flying the simulator across a "dangerous" flight course. There was an area for the munchkins to practice their flying skills which was the size of the children's jet globes. Of course, there was Koko's Airplane, where kids maze fly through the labyrinth flight course, past the obstacles, go against enemy choppers and, of they reach the end. The obstacle course was like a maze or labyrinth for the trainees to fly through, starting from the entrance to the exit.

Finally, the kids capped their experiences and got the "stamp" of being a certified Koko Jets pilot by having their pictures taken in their pilot suits.

Parent-child bonding moments were seen everywhere. The young ones got the afternoon high from the delicious cherry found in the Nestle Breakfast Cereals medium pack Koko Krunch, Honey Stars, Milo Breakfast Cereals, Cookie Crisp, Snowflakes and Trix. It was a blast seeing dads and kids collecting all six stamp planes and learning how to be a certified Koko Jets Pilot.

At 4 p.m., the main program started with hosts Bernina Carlos and Jam Concepcion welcoming the kids. Then they plunged into the Jets Game Relay 'Installed TV star Sam Concepcion rendered upbeat sing numbers to entertain the roaming Air Pioneers. Jets Stars and Koko Air Crews, of course, there were several raffle games for everyone. Overall, it was a hands-down interactive experience!

Nestle Koko Krunch Jets Academy was made possible by Nestle Breakfast Cereals in partnership with Market! Market! Co-sponsors for the weekend of adventure were Silvercross Fresh Milk, Metro Colours, Epson Philippines, Kevin's Toy Shop and Nexgen.

WORRY-FREE LIVING

Yvonne Yuchengco Juanico, president of Malayan Insurance Company Inc., says the new personal finance is for really open at Wealth's Financial Wellness.

Adding, the first time-ever branch marketing company that launches prepaid insurance card in the country, Wealth at the Ayala Triangle Tower, Ayala Center in Cebu's Business City, the company expects to sell around 1,000 prepaid accidental reimbursement insurance which provides policyholders of accidental death and dismemberment benefits ranging from P50,000 to P200,000 for only P50 each. Available at all Wealth outlets nationwide, the prepaid insurance cards are valid for one year.

Yuchengco Juanico said Wealth's Financial Wellness is a unique concept that will help Filipinos manage their finances and achieve financial security. Wealth at the Ayala Triangle Tower is the first of its kind in the country.

ROSEWHITE JOINS 1ST INTERNATIONAL RAMADAN FAIR

From Oct. 31 to 26, 2006, RoseWhite Skin Care Philippines joined the 1st International Ramadan Fair held at the Glorietta 1 in Intramuros, Manila.

As part of RoseWhite's support for the Muslim Community and the promotion of halal beauty products, it hosted a special talk show for Muslim women during the fourth day of the affair. Talk show discussions were all about how women could prepare themselves and maintain their skin. RoseWhite Global 101 trainers and Rosewhite Global Ambassador Mahmud Telmar Gabil gave her personal tips on how to look and feel good no matter your age. The beauty queen also interviewed RoseWhite's trade marketing specialist Cherry Cabanela, who gave an extra-real talk on how the RoseWhite Skin Care Regimen effortlessly turns back the years on a mature woman's face. The beauty discussion ended with lucky participants winning RoseWhite Skin Care Sets after joining the event's "Spin-a-Beauty Wheel" trivia game. Being a participant of anytime after RoseWhite at or give a 20% discount on all its beauty products during the entire trade fair.

e-Services Philippines 2007

THE e-SERVICES PHILIPPINES (ESP) 2007 conference and exhibition will take place Oct. 31 and Nov. 1 at the Cebu Shangri-La Hotel in Mandaluyong City. Since as its 1st year, the ESP conference and exhibition has been hailed as an important IT and IT-enabled services (ITES) networking venue for the region. For the past six years, the event has served to promote the Philippines as a preferred venue for IT outsourcing by attracting foreign investors and global trade initiatives. Last year's event generated at least $220 million in contracts. The 2007 event will also be the first edition of the conference and exhibition that Cebu's Trade Expositions and Missions (Cebu) is aggressively promoting in Asia.

BUSINESS

Committed investments in '06 hit ₱274B

DTI says registered projects are expected to create 135,069 jobs

AMY LA

By Roland N. Ocampo

BENCHMARK AGENCIES OF THE Department of Trade and Industry reported that a total of P274 billion in investments were committed last year, an increase of about 10.6 percent from the P251 billion registered in 2005.

Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said the amount posted in 2006 was 8 percent higher than the target of P254 billion for the year.

The goal was based on the government's target of growing the economy by 5.9 percent a year.

Once operational, "the 694 projects registered with the Board of Investments and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority are expected to create a total of 135,069 jobs," Favila said. "Job generation in 2006 grew by 14.3 percent from the 118,145 jobs promised in 2005."

The surge in investments, Favila added, "is a reflection of the investors' confidence, brought about by the improved fiscal position of the country and the enhanced business environment."

The BOI registered 221 projects worth P130 billion—16 percent higher than the P163 billion registered in 2005.

Some of the largest projects listed with the BOI last year were 220Power Ltd.'s P43.9-billion coal-fired power plant; Smart Communications' P32-billion 3G cellular phone system, as well as Globe Telecom's P1.3-billion project.

Peza registered 463 projects worth P64 billion in investments—25 percent higher than the previous year's P47 billion.

In 2006, the biggest Peza-lured ventures were mostly those related to electronics and semiconductors. But there were also Upland Resources Corp.'s P14-billion production of ironclinth laminate; HMCs 3 billion business process outsourcing venture; Lepanto Consolidated Mining's P1.27 billion copper project; and Am. Carbo Bioenergy's P2.25-billion ethanol facility.

With such performance data year, Favila said DTI was raising the investment target to 12 percent a year from the original 10 percent that was adopted two years.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Bernardino, who is also BOI managing head, said the DTI was optimistic that the 2006 performance would be sustained through 2007, due to the expected inflows of capital in the infrastructure, mining, information and communications technology, tourism and health, and wellness sectors.

Hernandez noted the improved sectoral investment performance of infrastructure at 1,600 percent; real estate at 113 percent; agriculture at 941 percent; and information technology services at 7% percent.

He said local investors brought in commitments worth P182 billion, or 67 percent of the 2006 total, while foreign investors accounted for P92 billion.

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BSP's hedging tools trimmed GIR in 2006

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY'S GROSS INTERnational reserves, now at its all-time high of $23 billion, could have been higher had the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas refrained from applying its currency hedging tools, according to a Citigroup economist.

In a commentary dated Jan. 5, Citigroup senior economist Jonathan Anderson said that the GIR build-up would have exceeded $30 billion if the BSP had not taken out some of the US dollars it bought from the spot foreign currency market.

"Financial year 2006 was "marked by strong BSP intervention, particularly in the second half, to ease ... the rapid appreciation of the peso owing to strong remittance and investment flows, followed by unwelcome signs of the US dollar purchases."

Sterilization refers to a central bank's efforts to mop up excess funds pumped into the economy by an increase in net foreign asset arising from intervention in the spot foreign exchange market and reserve accumulation.

Going offshit data, the economist said the BSP had taken out peso equivalents to $5.98 billion via the foreign exchange swap market as of December last year. The figure represented the BSP's total short (sell) and long (buy) positions in the forwards and futures of foreign currencies against the peso.

A forward contract is an agreement between two parties to buy or sell an asset at a pre-agreed future point in time, while a futures contract is a contract to buy or sell a standardized quantity of commodity or financial instrument at a specified future point and delivery set at a specified time in the future.

The economist also said that the BSP's intervention and application of the trading mechanism that narrowed the onshore-offshore interest rate differential, had restrained nominal peso appreciation to 7.6 percent in 2006.

In real terms, Citigroup estimated an increase of the effective exchange rate index to 17 percent as of November, compared with the index average for 1998-2000, used as a post-currency crisis benchmark.

So there was no material loss in the real exchange rate, we don't expect any currency curbs from the BSP similar to those recently implemented by the Bank of Thailand to discourage offshore portfolio flows and sustain local currency appreciation," Anderson said.

A government source prior to the BSP's operations said Citigroup's analysis was correct because if the created funds were to allow the GIR to the rapidly to $30 billion, it might send the signal that it would like the peso to appreciate sharply. At a GIR level of $28 billion, the official said the peso could jump to as much as 45 to the US dollar.

The GIR, a key indicator of an economy's ability to service its foreign exchange requirements, was by $4.5 billion, or 24 percent, to 2006 over the end-2005 level of $18.49 billion.

Foreign reserves consist of the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, foreign investments and special drawing rights from multilateral institutions like the International Monetary Fund.

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BUSINESS Monday

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Private sector scores gains at Asean meet

Philippine business leaders to lead biofuels, franchising committees

By Rocnel M. Domingo

WHILE THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE 12TH Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Summit and its resumption may have proved to be a blessing for local businesses, especially those based in Cebu, the changed schedule was as first a setback for the private sector.

But the setback did not prevent Filipinos from displaying their leadership capabilities, not only in governance and cultural endeavors, but in business-related pursuits as well.

The Asean Business Advisory Council had built on June to speed with the Asean leaders, to whom the group was set to report and give their recommendations on how to realize the Asean Economic Community envisioned by 2015.

Last 30 minutes

If the summit had pushed through in December, the 30-member Asean BAC had at least an hour to exchange ideas with the leaders even dinner.

But the new schedule from Jan. 14-15 gave the group only half an hour to meet with the heads of state and of government.

Each of the 10 Asean members has three representatives to Asean BAC.

Big improvement

For the Philippines, they are Jose Concepcion Jr. (who chaired the group for two years until the 12th summit was over) Miguel Varela and Donald G. Dee—all three are leading members of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"There is/seems to actually a big improvement from the 18 minutes the Asean BAC was given during the 11th summit held in Kuala Lumpur in December 2005," an Asean BAC staff member tells the Inquirer.

"Half of those 30 minutes were already spent for introductions," he says. "The report and recommendations, and other matters the business leaders wanted to raise with the leaders had to be squeezed in during the remaining five minutes."

Still, limited time with the top decision-makers in the region provided stirring moments, especially for Philippine business sector, which was given crucial roles in examining efforts to integrate 10 disparate economies that include Singapore—one of the most advanced in the world—and Myanmar—one of them trailing in the development scale.

Two committees

During consultations with the Asean leaders, two committees were formed to take efforts to areas that were important for the region, both of which were to be led by Filipinos.

One was to be engaged in studying the large-scale use of alternative sources of energy like biodiesel that uses cassava oil or sweet from jatropha curcas, popularly known as tuba-tuba.

The was assigned to head the group, which he says was a recognition of the Philippines' regional leadership in research—and probably development as well—in the field of biofuels.

Promotion of biofuels had been one of the most significant issues discussed in Cebu during the summit.

Asean and its six dialog partners—China, Japan, South Ko-

PRIVATE, B2-4

THE ASEAN Summit ended with Philippine leaders sharing two new regional committees.

BOSCH HAND Tesda sign an agreement to improve Filipinos' automotive skills. At the signing were (from left) Mustafa Sezi, GM of Bosch Automotive aftermarket division, Michael Goh, GM of Bosch Southeast Asia aftersales service and diagnostics, Roland Odenthal, Bosch president and managing director, Ernesto Bolivar, executive director of Tesda and director Sazon and Cagas of Tesda.

Bosch, Tesda join hands to advance tech skills

By Dawn L. Loza

ROBERT BOSCH INC., THE PHILIPPINE FLAGship of Robert Bosch GmbH (Germany), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) signed a memorandum of agreement that formally engages both organizations in providing advanced automotive technology courses for skilled Filipino mechanics and technicians.

The MOA was formally entered into by Bosch president and managing director Roland Odenthal, and TESDA director general Augusto Syjuco recently in Makati City.

As part of the agreement, Bosch will provide the government agency with investment-standard training modules, which aims to enhance the local auto service industry through the proper education of its skilled workforce.

Skills training

To address the increasing need for more efficient transportation in the Philippines and Asia, Odenthal said that workshops "must be equipped with the proper equipment, service technique and most importantly, skilled personnel."

Through TESDA's network of some 120 schools and training institutions in the country, the program also provides access for workshop owners and operators to receive the same certificate courses that are recognized in over 12,000 workshops in the Bosch service network worldwide.

"Not only will they [workshop owners] be able to serve a wide variety of private and commercial vehicles," Odenthal said. "They will also benefit by gaining adequate knowledge, work competence, and therefore expand their livelihood opportunities."

The growing demand for more complex vehicular services is attributed to advanced components and systems now fitted into most new cars.

Repair services

To date, the Philippine auto service market idled thus the need for vehicle diagnostics and repair service that would match increasingly-complicated vehicle systems.

Courses to be offered under the Bosch-Tesda program are gasoline and diesel fuel injection technology as well as the calibration and repair of electronically controlled diesel injection pumps, which is exclusive to Bosch in the Philippines.

Bosch also now provides certificate courses at the Philippine Auto-Technical Training Center (PATTC) located at its service center in Kamagong St., San Antonio Village, Makati.

The institute offers practical training on both diesel and gasoline injections, vehicle electrics and electronics, and brake systems.

The facility is equipped with the latest in automotive diagnostics and tools to ensure that participants "are provided with an intensive and thorough understanding, armed to skills and knowledge to perform quality service in step with the latest technology," according to Jose Yeo, the company's manager for automotive aftermarket service and training.

Special courses

He explained that diesel injection and gasoline injection training courses enable participants to understand the construction and operation principles, assembly, diagnosis and repair of gasoline and diesel injection systems.

The vehicle electric and electronics training program, on the other hand, allows trainees to be acquainted with fault-measuring techniques and the different applicable types of oscilloscope patterns, making them fit to work on specific functions and effects of the construction parts.

Finally, the brake systems course provides fundamental knowledge on the conventional and anti-lock braking system, and specializes in diagnostic testing and repair of the anti-skid/traction brake safety systems.

Some 75 percent of the country's diesel vehicles run on Bosch fuel systems, while a significant majority also run on Bosch gasoline systems.

Trainees who graduate from courses offered at the PATTC receive Bosch technician certificates after passing the requisite certification exams.

Top technicians

Since February 2006, the training center has produced certified and skilled Bosch system technicians and Bosch diesel mechanics who are accredited to the Bosch expansion workshops.

Bosch credited Tesda in 2006 as the company with the widest product range in the Philippine after market, translating into a sustained sales level for the company's auto group.

The company's product offering consists of over 50,000 part numbers and 18 core product lines in the field of electrical vehicle spark plugs, wiper blades, and gasoline and diesel systems.

Other Bosch products include diagnostic systems, body electronics, braking systems and filters.

The innovator's dilemma

"THE INNOVATOR'S DILEMMA" is the title of a best-selling book by Clayton Christensen, a professor at the Harvard Business School.

Christensen defines two types of innovations: Sustaining innovations are those that build upon and enhance the value of existing technologies.

Disruptive innovations, on the other hand, are major deviations from the technologies that are currently in place.

According to Christensen, disruptive innovations tend to reduce the value of existing technologies.

In the context of organizations, all innovations are disruptive to a degree.

Any change in the way things are normally done at the office, in the field, or on the shop floor will, unnecessarily or least, disrupt operations.

The more substantial the change, for example, a major overhaul in the way customers receive and do business with the company, the longer the learning period and the greater the disruption in operations.

Any interruption of operations and the unavoidable decline in productivity arising from changes in something that most organizations would do well to avoid.

This is a major reason why managers and employees are loathe to innovate. While creative and innovative ideas are often considered at all levels of the organization, few are ultimately implemented.

This is so not only because of the expected decline in productivity, but for the uncertainty that it will create.

As a rule, managers and employees are rewarded for their consistent decline in current productivity. Performance evaluations and compensation systems are typically based on metrics that reflect immediate and measurable contributions to output, and ultimately to the bottom line.

Seldom are employees rewarded for their innovative ideas and creative ways of doing things. While innovative moves in response to changing circumstances potentially enhance the firm's capacity to create value in the future, they are not immediately reflected in the firms' profits and loss statements and market caps.

They are typically ignored in the annual corporate ritual known as PER, or Performance Evaluation and Review.

Ironically most managers and employees are aware of the need for change, they are reluctant to be censured, much less, to implement change. This paradox reflects the classic "incentive problem" in organizations.

As agents acting on behalf of their employers, managers and employees are reluctant to assume the risks typically associated with the implementation of change in organizations.

Empowering them, by itself, does not ensure that innovations will take place in organizations. Employees must be rewarded for their initiatives in coming up with creative ideas and implementing changes in the work place. Conceiving and implementing change must be made a part of their job descriptions.

Yet another major reason for the reluctance of managers and employees to initiate change in their organizations are the cumbersome control mechanisms and administrative procedures that are firmly in place to assist business organizations today.

Intended to ensure that things are "done right," they also have the undesirable effect of maintaining the status quo in the face of rapid change.

It is really ironic that while many progressive managers today are aware of the need to continuously change and innovate in order to create shareholder value over the long haul, employees are not rewarded—or worse, are penalized—for doing so.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is an active academic and a knowledge management consultant. Feedback at bbpascual@globelines.com.ph)

MAPping the Future

Nicolo S. Pedroche

Garage ingenuity

GEORGE HOUSE! L. A. DIRE! In case the rest 2. it haven for took, limb lings and unused spare equipment. 3. A clingy and cobbled domain of bicycles and lawn mowers 4. A hotbed of creativity and innovation.

In addition to sheltering automobiles, garages have housed some of the greatest technological innovations of the modern era and have birthed an assortment of widely popular tools it will handle.

If you're sitting at a computer, you've bumped into the products of garage-inspired genius.

Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak constructed the first Apple computer in a garage. 30 years later its corporate history back to a garage where Bill Hewlett and David Packard designed the oscillator.

Google founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page worked on their garage when building their search engine. You Tube was claim the garage as its place of origin, too.

Before performing in sold-out auditoriums, rock groups (hobby) Sculpt and the Cricket, Nirvana, and Metallica jammed out in junk-filled garages.

So many musical artists began their careers in garages that "garage rock" has become a recognized genre, Apple has even developed a software suite named GarageBand to help amateur musicians produce their work.

Inspiration

Do enhance future fuel economy and ingenuity in cars Internet be restored from garage service stories? Featured on CBS.com, John Baldoni's article "Where's Your Garage?" encourages readers to make space for inventions with the following suggestions:

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

Build your own garage. Give one space to exercise your creativity. Construct an area to spark original thinking and sound out your ideas. It may be a home office, the corner table of a local coffee shop, or on outof-the-way conference room.

The location isn't as important as long as you're able to carve out the intellectual space to look at your work from a fresh angle.

As Published writes, "The point is to be in your garage in thinking creatively about your business. What occurs may be an idea for a breakthrough product, or it may be a simple improvement that saves customer time and money."

Building your garage may not spark an epic invention, but time in the garage can expose flaws in established patterns of thought, yield insights for systems enhancements, or generate original ideas for meeting complex challenges.

Risk-taking

Allow risk in your garage. Dare to dream in the garage. Question long-held assumptions, and experiment with alternate ways of solving problems. Take comfort in the value of discarded ideas.

Remember, the words of Thomas Edison: "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work." When you enter the garage, feel the freedom to explore new terrain in your technology.

Invite your boss into the garage. When you've landed upon a great idea and given shape to it, the next step is to share it with others. Introduce your company by inviting friends and family in your garage.

Once you've had their feedback, revise or touch up the idea. Then, you'll be ready to bring your boss to the garage. Give your boss the opportunity to weigh in or her hands-on and family in your garage.

Using the extra scale in familiarize your boss with your work will increase the likelihood of its application.

Bring your customer into the garage. "Customers can be your allies in innovation," writes John Baldoni.

Involve them into your creative sphere and allow them to interact with your ideas. Why not have your end-user pilot a new concept before developing it? Better to show an associate the garage than to sink energy and costs into an unwanted product or service.

To read the complete text of John Baldoni's "Where's Your Garage?" article, visit http://www.cbs.com/leadership/leadership_baldoni/column.html?123=123123

For information on John Maxwell's to donate or public lecturership or teamwork workshops, please email us or maxwell@pinoyspirit.ph or call 833-20919/2732 and ask for Jen or Bing. See MAXWELL ON 90-WEEKEND to get daily IMD leadership insights from John Maxwell. Gulfstar

MOVEMENTS

SAP names Global-SME president

TO FULL IT'S GROWING BUSINESS AMONG SMALL AND MIDSIZE ENTERprises (SMEs), SAP announced that Khan appointed Rene Pete Klaey as president of Global SME, a new organizational unit overseeing sales, marketing, operations and alignment of resources dedicated to serving small and midsize customers.

The appointment creates additional managerial focus and support to SAP's SME efforts, and reflects the evolution of SAP's go-to-market model to serve customers in increasing numbers through a multi-channel approach.

Klaey will report to Leo Apotheker, president, Customer Solutions and Operations, and member of the SAP AG Executive Board.

Increasing its presence among small and midsize enterprises is a key driver of ongoing growth and a significant area of strategic investment for SAP.

With SME's representing for approximately 85 percent of its total customer base, SAP is aggressively expanding its footprint in this segment by building its delivery channels and the mix of its product portfolio of business management software designed specifically to meet the market, industry and resource requirements of small and midsize businesses.

In his new role, Klaey will collaborate with global and regional management and sales organizations to accelerate SAP's SME efforts, including developing an integrated go-to-market strategy, and targeted programs for direct and indirect channels, and innovations in marketing and customer engagement for SMEs.

Citibank names new director

Citibank Phils. has announced the appointment of Judith Sy as Director for its Wealth Management business in the country.

In her new role, Co will also be part of the bank's Senior Management team.

Sy joined Citibank Phils. in 1994 and over the last 12 years, has occupied various roles in the retail banking business covering sales, Citigold wealth management services, and branch business management.

Her most recent assignment was branch head for Cebu and earlier in her tenure was Luzon Area Head.

Sy is a graduate of the University of San Carlos—Business Core Leader and is a certified public accountant.

Private sector scores gains at Asean meet

First page B1-1

sea, India, Australia and New Zealand—agreed to do so during the 2nd East Asia Summit held Jan. 15.

Another committee was formed to tackle the development of franchising outside Asean.

Franchising leader

Jamie Lim, newly elected president of PCCI, was named head of the committee.

It was Lim who discovered during the Asean Business and Investment Summit held during the first leg of the Asean Summit last December the region's opportunities to franchising and the potential of the business model to push Asean toward economic integration.

"I may designated to head the committee, but I answer in a direct to member of Asean BAC) who is a Malaysian," Lim says. "That means we are working with the best because Malaysia is considered in the region as very advanced in the field of franchising."

But's Dee and Lim say they expect their respective groups to start hard work in the next two months.

During the dialogue with leaders, Asean BAC urged them to push for a "real meaningful partnership" between the government and private sector in working toward a common market by 2015.

Jose Concepcion Jr., who presided over the council said the existing relationship passed on in Singapore last Jan. 14, says the private sector supports the target of 2015 for the integration.

But Concepcion says that does most industries in member countries are not ready for single market economy, support from and regular consultations with the government are needed.

"We are the engine of change, but some times there is no investment environment. But seven the government and private sector," Concepcion says. "However, I'm very confident that our dialog would have positive results; we have been talking of economic integration for the last 20 years."

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Steadfast stewardship for TOYM awardee and eTelecare GM in 2007

eTelecare Global Solutions, the world's most awarded call center company, moves in 2007 with a bag of sterling achievements and fresh inspirations for future growth.

This Philippine-grown company last mid December, yielded in the person of Benedict C. Hernandez the first Philippine general manager of a call center company to be named among the distinguished The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) of 2006. In TOYM's 40 years, Hernandez is only the sixth recipient of the honor for Business Leadership.

Reputable judges for the awards program lauded Hernandez's leadership of eTelecare, representing Philippine call center company that now counts 54 awards, mostly given by US-based trade associations, publications and firms focusing on business trends. Its Philippine operations are equally honored, such as the 2005 Employer of the Year award given eTelecare by the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines.

Hernandez, a magna cum laude psychology graduate of UP and a Most Outstanding Graduate Student of the same university, has interestingly already gained several "firsts" and "youngest" citations in his career. He was the youngest GM of a call center company when he joined eTelecare. Prior to eTelecare, he was youngest vice president of Nextel Philippines at age 27, and youngest supervisor and then manager at Smart Communications at age 22. At 19, he was also youngest faculty member of the UP Psychology Department.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo with TOYM awardee Benedict Hernandez together with his family

One may think that Hernandez is in to such distinctions. But as things turned out, the prestigious citation by the Philippine Jaycees as The Outstanding Young Men for 2006, still came unexpectedly.

"My pursuit to lead our company to world class performance is never really fueled by wanting to gain recognition or awards. It is driven by my passion to prove that Filipinos can be the best and the brightest as global knowledge workers. Nevertheless, awards such as TOYM are still powerful encouragement and confidence-building for individuals like myself," Hernandez states.

It developed a company mantra: investing to outperform. This is a commitment that is breathed in and out in all aspects of the company operations. eTelecare invests in choosing the best talent, in providing best-in-class training, and support to enable its employees to be the best in its industry.

eTelecare professionals are empowered to make vital company decisions. As a result, they own up to their actions and develop a good sense of corporate ownership. "At eTelecare, we build a culture where employees would say 'this is my company and I can make a difference,'" states Hernandez.

In 2005, a different twist took place in its corporate life. While most corporate buys involved a Philippine outfit being bought by an overseas company, eTelecare gave a different story. It bought an American company, the Arizona-based Phase 2 Solutions. eTelecare then grew from being a pure offshore service provider to one that offers a wider choice of onshore and offshore services.

Today the seven-year-old Philippine-based eTelecare counts over 18,000 employees and 12 call centers globally in some of 7,000 employees, spread over four different centers (Makati, Lilo, Alabang and Cebu) in the Philippines continues to grow at a rapid pace.

With its unique corporate culture, eTelecare Global Solutions delivers a brand of service for its clientele that includes Fortune 500 companies. eTelecare Global Solutions provides innovative customer care, technical support, sales, email and chat solutions for market-leading companies in the telecommunications, high technology, financial services, travel, healthcare and other industries. It renders value to its clients by focusing on quality and performance inevitably reducing clients' operational costs.

Reinforced by sweet success and the increasing figures of local employment for the youth by the call center industry, Hernandez has moved logically onto the sphere of industry development while carrying eTelecare's banner.

Hernandez is a founding member and the first elected chairman of the Contact Center Association of the Philippines (CCAP) that grew to 38 member-companies in 4 years. With CCAP, the industry responds to challenges and sets up linkages with other sectors such as government and the academe to push forward the country's advantage as host of call center services.

Employing over 170,000 contact center professionals, the industry was responsible for revenues of about $2Billion in 2006 and fuels growth in related sectors as real estate, food and retail.

For now, Hernandez believes that the key to continued growth both for eTelecare and the industry is steadfast stewardship.

"Despite the amazing growth and success reaped by our industry, the work has really just begun. We need to continue this task of taking this industry to its fullest potential. The basis of our collective effort are not only to be counted by the hundreds of thousands of jobs or billions of dollars in revenues we will generate. By pursuing global excellence, we likewise help drive up national pride and confidence in ourselves being Filipinos," declares Hernandez.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo awards eTelecare Global Solutions General Manager, Benedict Hernandez, as one of The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) for 2006 for the Business Leadership category

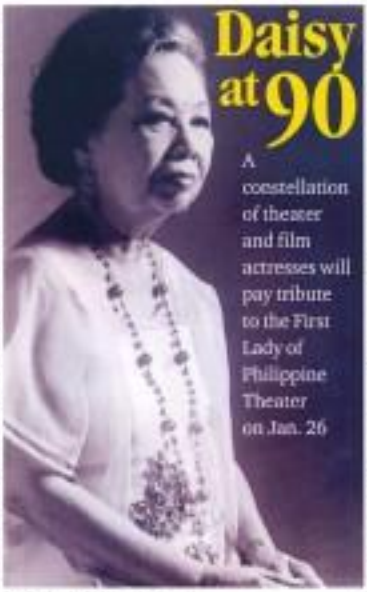
LIFESTYLE

Editor-Chief: Raoul Pertierra
Associate Editor: Lito B. Zulueta

By Gilda Cadiz

Daisy at 90

A constellation of theater and film actresses will pay tribute to the First Lady of Philippine Theater on Jan. 26



NATIONAL Artist for Theater Daisy Hontiveros-Avellana

NATIONAL ARTIST FOR Theater Daisy Hontiveros-Avellana turns 90 on Jan. 26.

She'd gladly spend that day at home, resting, watching "Desperately" and her favorite talk shows, and just savoring the sweet scent of a life lived extraordinarily well, but for the last a traditional Aetian reaching 90 years old is a rare milestone that calls for something grander than an afternoon nap.

"Misery! Can you believe it?" she asks herself, incredulous that she has survived this long.

Avellana, in her nonagenarian years, is a bit hard of hearing, but otherwise suffers from no major illnesses. She's very lucid, her memory still sharp with color and detail.

She remembers the high points of her Renaissance life (actress for theater, film and radio; writer; director; teacher; all-around cultural worker), and is not above laughing at the occasional low moments.

Like the time she went to a well-known doctor in research on drug addiction. She was about to play Mary Tyrone, the drug-addled mother of a dysfunctional family in Eugene O'Neill's "Long Day's Journey into Night," and she needed guidance on how an addict—a woman at that—moved, thought, responded.

Her visit to the doctor was duly noted by Manila's insular society, and word quickly went around that the eminent Daisy Hontiveros Avellana, mom and wife of the equally celebrated film and theater director Lamberto Avellana, had become addicted.

"Nahiyang-hiya ako," says Avellana, chortling. "They said, Ay Daisy's gone nuts! Sa'n siya, Diliag, I'm sure! And that really went around, you know."

Acclaimed roles

To celebrate her 90th birthday, the Cultural Center of the Philippines is mounting "Daisy" on Jan. 26, a grand tribute that will gather some 25 women —acting luminaries from theater and film—to perform excerpts of Avellana's most acclaimed roles.

Her frequent collaborators Nanding Crame-Rogers and Sandra Cargilo will read lines from Nick Joaquin's "Portrait of the Artist as Filipino" while four musical stars—Celeste Legaspi, Cecile Marcelo, Menchu Lauchengco Puno and May Bayot—will sing excerpts from Cayetano Reyes's "Lawaya," the musical version of the play.

Cecille Candelaria Alvarez as Medea; Shamaine Centenera Buencamino as Bernardarda; Baby Barredo as Lady Macbeth; Avellana herself as Segunda Montes as Bernarda Alba (she played Bernarda's daughter Adela opposite her mother in the original production); Frances Makil as Lady Macbeth; and a student from the Philippine High School for the Arts reading from Avellana's first starring role in college, John Galsworthy's "The Silver Box"—these, plus appearances by other actresses such as Gina Alajar, Shaina Magdayao, Vivian Velez and Dolly Bonavides (the very first Bada, now a lawyer) under Irma delleosa's staging, promises a distinguished night worthy of the presence of the First Lady of Philippine Theater.

Avellana herself seems flustered at all the attention. "When I first heard about it, I said, 'Is it possible? I can't believe it!/Me?'"

Gracious, visionary

Her characteristic self-effacement was only one element of the gracious but visionary personality Avellana brought to her trailblazing work across Philippine theater, radio, film and movie. She was a magazine editor and award-winning short story writer, before the decades, beginning in the postwar years.

Along with her husband and 18 other friends, she helped found the Barangay Theater Guild (BTG) in 1950, now the country's oldest existing theater company. Its last production was a dramatic reading of Ladislas Bodso's "The Vigil" at the Far Eastern University Theater in September 2006—directed, but of course, by Avellana.

BTG's weekend productions, mostly staged by her husband, allowed Avellana to play some of the greatest female roles in drama: Medea, Joan of Arc, Lady Macbeth, Sarah Bernhardt, Strindin, Bernarda Alba, Desdemona, Lupe in Nick Joaquin's "Portrait" and, most indelibly, Candida in another Joaquin opus, "Portrait of the Artist as Filipino."

Her Candida was so definitive that she ended up playing it "countless" times, in her estimation. In one run alone, held at the open-air Ateneo Garden in Intramuros, Avellana swayed Candida-some 200 times opposite Daily Bonavides as Bada (Crame-Rogers took over). Armando Goyena played the role of Dory Justo.

In a documentary that accompanied Avellana's conferment of National Artist honors in 1999, Bonavides remembers, near a fellow National Artist (for Literature), an earlier meeting this play as a young man. For him, "Daisy Avellana's Candida is 'Portrait' was the highest moment of Philippine theater. She was Philippine theater at a time when there was hardly any Philippine theater."

When Lamberto Bland "Portrait," Avellana and Crame-Rogers reprised their roles. It was Avellana's last foray into film as an actress ("My parents were against it, and also my children's"), but she would go on to win recognition for her story treatment of "Sakay," and would also help resurrect her husband's screen for the classic films "Kasal, Kasali" and "Dalagita."

Her work as director, actor and producer of adapted plays for radio is even more remarkable. Starting in 1952, DZFM broadcast weekly 40-minute dramatic readings broadcast over radio dzFM. Daisy adapted and cast the plays, and Lamberto directed the readings with a live audience in the studio.

The first Shakespearean play to be aired locally in its entirety was BTG's "Othello." In 1953 alone, the readings made up a staggering canon: Andersen's "Sum of Lovesick"; Shaw's "Bury the Dead"; Howard's "They Know What They Wanted"; Guerrero's "Forever," "Forsaken Island" and "Frustrations"; Tolentino and Tuvera's "The Man Who Came to Dinner"; Zulueta da Costa's "Like the Mother"; Feliciano's "Little Women"; Lorca's "Blood Wedding" and "The House of Bernarda Alba"; Engel's "Inspector General"; Williams' "The Glass Menagerie"; Cabusa's "The Borrowed Hat"; Dickens's "Marriage Proposal"; Shakespeare's "Othello," "Julius Caesar," "Hamlet," "The Merchant of Venice" and many more.

Their work in radio and the stage didn't pay—everything was gratis—but the couple didn't mind.

"My husband and I weren't rich, but we loved what we were doing," said Avellana in the 1999 documentary. "And that was good enough for us."

Lesson in humility

The greatest lesson she has learned from her long career, she says, is humility. And she has the requisite lifechanging anecdote to back it up.

"English teacher and drama coach Jose Ychaso gave me the best lesson in humility. At that time, I was already the star of all the plays in UP. And then, when we were putting up these three one-act plays, she said 'I was going to play the role of a maid! I was hurt, of course, and humiliated. I told Mrs. Ychaso I had a headache and went home. I told my parents about it, expecting them to side with me. But my parents (Inquirers Court Justice José Hontiveros and Vicenta Parás) instead scolded me! They said, Go back, apologize, and play the role. So I did. Alas words, her theater friends told Mrs.

DAISY 87

Piolo interacts with poets, artists in CCP show

SOME 30 FILIPINO POETS AND writers' responses to several poems-turned-wall color pose to the visual-arts festival set exhibit, "Chronotext Reloaded," Jan. 25-Feb. 28 at the Cultural Center of the Philippines Bulwagang Juan Luna (Main Gallery).

The show turns a page from previous "Chronotext" I and II mounted in the 1990s by the Philippine Literary Arts Council (PLAC).

Curated by Sid Gomez Hidalgo, Jean-Marie Syjuco and Kip Yuson, "Chronotext Reloaded" celebrates the 20th anniversary of PLAC with members Jimmy Abad, Cirilo Bautista, Ricky de Ungria and Yuson leading the poet-exhibitors.

Their works—from holographic to photographic, illustrations with poems in oil paintings, sculptural installations to video—will be joined by those of relatively established writers such as Francisco Arcellana, Edith Tiempo, Gilda Cordero-Fernando, Raul Isgala, Tita Lacambra-Ayuda, Sylvia Mendez Jimenez, the late Lilia Antonio, Ophelia Benamera, Merlie Alunan, Marjorie Evasco, Butch Gelisan, Pete Lacaba, Gemot Ali Sylvia, Gumpo Arcellana, Eugene Evasco, Jaime Ramos, Fanuli Rivera, Margie Martinez and Hidalgo.

From abroad, PLAC members and friends have sent in their contributions: Israel Cortes Abalajon in London, and Eric Gamalinda, Nick Carbo, Luisa Igloria, Glenn Tabico, Jack Lienert and Stefanie Evangelista Hedlund in the United States.

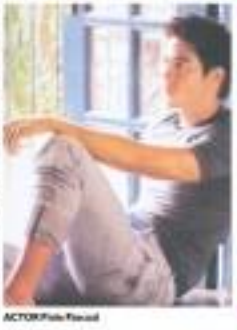
Shadows cited Pedro Pascual has written Lienert's review on pages of Online Studio his magazine, and the literary-visual showcase is a consequence to the exhibits.

Butch Macasaquisac, Rabeth Labaga and Frank Cimatu from Baguio are also participating.

Visual artists participating are National Artist Benedicto "Bencab" Cabrera, Dindy Arriesta, Pil Delarosa, Manny Baldemora, Noah Dillon, Jean-Marie Syjuco, Judy Sibayan, Sister Stanislaus, Raul Pocalla, Rosalah Tupaz-la, Rolando Bautista, Sheng Zialong Lorenzo Javier, Boy Tacbagan, Ricardo Pandilla, Marvin Ballao, Jun Cruz Reyes, Pow Sig and Igan Pabayo.

Other participating writers are Jose Moya, Vim Nadera, Pig, Leoncio Deriada, Rolando Tolfo, Sarge Lacuesta, Joel Toledo, Ginny Mata, Cathelene Zamora, Merlie Kasigbak and Angelo Suarez.

Performance art, musical works and readings will highlight the exhibit opening on Thursday at 6 p.m. Call 8321702.



ACTOR Piolo Pascual

Onglepho show opens gallery

JAMES ONGLEPHO'S (left) exhibit will be the inaugural show of the new Avila Art Gallery at the SM Mall of Asia on Jan. 26.

The show consists of landscapes and flower paintings in oil, pastel and colored pencil.

Onglepho is a Filipino artist whose paintings are influenced by the Chinese style. His works display detailed observation of nature.

His landscapes and flowers derive from Chinese composition but rendered with the technique of Western painting, resulting in a semi-abstract style for which Onglepho has been recognized in Philippine art.

The Asia Art Gallery had been located at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall since 1994. It has attracted art collectors and enthusiasts.

"The local art circle has thrived since the 1990s, when SM Megamall opened her Center and hosted the exhibits of many master artists," says Onglepho.

"Art galleries in the metro area also helped nurture an art environment where more people learned to appreciate painting. It paved the way for an active art scene. More art galleries opened and the crowds grew. Soon, other malls followed suit and opened their own gallery spaces."

Onglepho's gallery isn't easy, says the artist.

"First, you'll need luxury and home to carry on permanent business," he says. "Then you'll have to realize that collecting is more important than selling.

"Get master artworks if you can because finding good artworks can be difficult, especially when it's an old piece done by a master artist. Remember that the value of good artworks increases over time."

Onglepho says a 30" x 40" oil painting by Malaysia or Legazpi that was worth around P30,000 two and in the 1980s may now be worth P1.5 million today.

"It is not surprising that in the Philippine metro art collectors eventually become gallery owners," Onglepho says. "They know the value of paintings and raise them as worthy pieces of investment."

Promising art scene

With the Philippine economy improving, the future of the local art scene looks promising. Onglepho related that in Taipei, Taiwan, in 1999, the Galleries Association of ROC sponsored Art Taipei International at the World Trade Center. The sale of the five-day fair went as much as NT$130 million, thanks to careful planning and organization.

During that period, Taiwan's top artists had their oil paintings snapped up by collectors even before the oil on those paintings dried up.

At Section 4, Chung Hsiao East Road, Taipei, five condominiums of Apollo Building had 42 galleries in the 1990s. In Jan. 2006, only six galleries remained open. But when the galleries association sponsored another art fair in May, the art industry was revolved.

Onglepho notes that the art market in China, established in 1995, has since become an emerging artist's haven due to the progress in major cities like Shanghai and Beijing.

Galleries in China are doing good business because many people have become art collectors, participating actively in art auctions, especially in Shanghai, which Onglepho believes has become the center of art in Asia.

The good economy has translated into a greater appreciation for the arts, and people have begun investing in artworks.

The rise in the market was also due largely to the success of art auctions companies. In 2000, China's 20 auction companies held 650 auctions in one year, and sales reached 1.6 billion yuan. In 2004, 46 auction companies combined for total sales of 13 million yuans. In 2005, 38 auction companies held auctions, and sales reached 930 million yuans.

Galleries in the Philippines continue to open over the years, and Onglepho is optimistic that the art scene will has a bright future.

"What we need is cooperation within the art industry," he says. "We need to use each one's individual strengths to revitalize the industry by acting official as exhibition sites. Galleries must take the first step and strive for the world's market by participating in international exhibitions, organizing more exchanges with other nations, and expanding art activity and exhibition spaces. Then we can generate more opportunities in an international scale."

Onglepho thinks it is possible to stage a national art fair, and soon an international art fair.

"We can stand on our own feet, and set the same time embrace the universe by coming up with a new art vision that spans the 21st century. If the Old Group still supports such an idea, it may help the local art industry break into the world art scene."

The 20th one-man exhibit of James Onglepho will open on Jan. 26, Friday, 6 p.m. at the same date at the Gallery. 2/F SM 2373, Entertainment Mall (across from The one!), SM Mall of Asia, Pasay City. Details of hours are 9:00 to 9:00pm. Mondays to Sundays and Every Day. Call 551-3662.

"DREAMSCAPE"

"LOTUS" (above) and "The Song of Life" (left)

"AMONG the Flowers"

VISUAL ARTS

Magsaysay-Ho monoprints at Nicheogeo

Andy Magsaysay-Ho will exhibit hand-colored monoprints at the Nicheogeo Museum (NOE) Pte.ltd., 3/F Pearl Bank, Makati starting Jan. 23. The artist will work with the Singapore Tyler Print Institute and the University of the Philippines Institute of Printmaking and will also make 30 prints on handmade cotton paper with cassava and rural life as subjects. Portrait by self (described as the artist smoking at the 60th week of the Singapore Biennale), followed by Fernando and Pablo Sarmiento, Victorio Edades, Ismael Mirasol and Fabian de la Rosa. Magsaysay-Ho is considered the first Filipino-Indonesian.

'Superheroes' at Crucible

Tony de Zuñiga presents "Superheroes," until Jan. 28, at the Crucible Gallery (4/F, Metrobank Plaza, Sling 4, Mandaluyong City). After over 30 years in the comics industry in the United States, the artist will showcase his "superheroes." The color scenes he has created through the years are a veritable superhero pantheon spanning the greatest adventures of Mr. and Mrs. Incredible, Superman, Spiderman, Supergirl, Catman/The Batman, the Incredible Hulk, the X-Men, Thor, the Punisher, Blade and Red Sonja. Call 5310000.

Dexter at Ayala Museum

"Iron Brother: Ignilac," an exhibit of recent sculptures and ceramics, will be on display at the Ayala Museum Artist's Space, 2/F, Glass Wing, Ave. 25, Lot. 5. The exhibit features small-scale figurative sculptures and ceramic bas reliefs by California native Tom Dexter. He will also conduct a public lecture and demonstration at the Ayala Museum, 2 to 4 p.m., on Jan. 28.

Dizon at Pinoi Art Gallery

Jet Dizon presents his fifth one-man show "Wetland," Jan. 20 - Feb. 25, at Pinoi Art Gallery (1 Sierra Madre St., Greenhills, Achiyoki, City, Hindi). The exhibit features 30 recent works on canvas and paper. The exhibit belongs to his watershed Dizon's new series that tangentially comment on the moves and values of the contract types. Call 6567100 0.

Aguilar at Magnet Gallery

Magnet Gallery MG-0306 presents Ben Aguila's "Pothole," Jan. 23 - Feb. 10. Aguila's first solo exhibit comes threaded through with a different theme on set of themes and personal negotiations of self to present issues with formulist problem-solving. By taking from the imagined to take form of the real, Aguilar evokes his paintings personally and subjectively focused. Call 4130000 or e-mail magnetgallery@yahoo.com or contact magnet.com.ph.

Photo workshops at Alcove

The Filipino Heritage Library's Alcove presents "The Silver Perspective: Workshops," Jan. 20 - Feb. 25. Participants pay 100 to set on Jan. 24, 28, 29, 31, and Feb. 1, 4-6 p.m. Call 893 9851, e-mail events@filipinoheritage.org.ph or visit www.filipinoheritage.org.ph.

Campos press history exhibit at UST Museum

The University of Santo Tomas Museum of Arts and Sciences is holding the exhibit "The Universities of 80: The Struggle and the Glory of Re Campos Francia in the Philippines," until Jan. 28. The exhibit chronicles the history of the revolution, the 78-year-old Asian student paper of 80 and the most respected Catholic campus paper in the Philippines. Founded in 1928 by José Gía Panganiban, who would later head the National Language Institute and write the "Diksyonaryo-Balarin Ingles-Pilipino." This victorian has contributed by journalists, writers, leaders and men Nationalist Letters. F. David, José Bonifacio Lumbera, Daisy Hontiveros-Avellana, C. Florida Mendoza. It is the only campus paper to have an entry in the Guinness Book of World Records. Call 406 1611 loc. 8336 or 731 3333.

"THAT Thing about Family Planning," by Alex Aguilar

"CANDO"

"DAYU"

Dominic Rubio in Singapore

DOMINIC RUBIO'S "EAGLE Totem" is the inaugural show of Galerie Joaquin Singapore for 2007.

The show which opens on Jan. 26, features 24 works inspired by Spanish colonial Philippines.

Galerie Joaquin Singapore is at the Regent Hotel, 1 Cuscaden Road, G/F Unit 3, Singapore 249715 (tel. 65.6733.3113).

A graduate of the University of Santo Tomas School of Fine Arts, Rubio has been painting for two decades now. He has been a member of the Blooms'ism Group of artists since the mid '90s.

In 2002, together with Cig de Pio, Jerry Maloda, Bayani Rey Acuña and Edwin Tito Reyes, he founded the Converts Group of Artists.

Born in Pavia, the lakeshore town in Iloilo famous for its woodcarving tradition, Rubio first studied briefly in the ceramics department of Pura Lin. of Manila, and later at The Pend Pintucio Dance del Sur.

He traveled around the Cordillera Region in Northern Mindanao, learning about the ancient cultural groups and ethnic minorities in these places such as the Bontoca and the T'boli tribes. He also lived with the B'laans and the Badjaos in the south of Mindanao.

In his works, Rubio explores Filipino personhood.

In his Singapore show, he will unveil culturally new works capturing the essence of the Filipino as situated in new landscapes.

Galerie Joaquin Singapore will also organize shows by Jeremiah Samal, Shawn Parial, Lydia Velasco and Carlo Magno in the year.

Tribute to pianist and pedagogue

SOME OF THE COUNTRY'S TOP pianists who were either former students or friends of pianist and former University of Santo Tomas piano professor Marina Leogardo-Bautista (1920-2006) will pay tribute to her in a free recital at the Francisco Santiago Hall, Santillán (CBCentral Tower) at 6:30 de la Costa St. and Makati Ave., Makati.

Partial musicians who will perform include Reynaldo Reyes, who will do Liszt's "La Campanella"; Ingrid Isla Santamaria, Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto in G minor; UST Music dean Raul Sunico and professor Mary Anne Espina, two members from Stella De Z Pianos by Barbosa-Gruell; UST Music professor Julie Ann Hallarga and Peter Thomson, "Hidagawa"; and Nigh Ismail, who will narrate Chopin's Etude No. 1, Op. 25.

Friends Gary Garcia, Jonathan Cruz, Blandina Hizalan and Helen Reyes, and former students Marilu de la Cruz, Mary Ann Chiong-Javier, Ma. Lourdes Zarina Pecson will also perform.

The late Leogardo-Bautista was one of the last students of Maestro Francisco Santiago Iglesias (under the colonial voice carrier).

She received her Bachelor of Music degree in Piano, degree from the UST Conservatory of Music.

In the mid-'70s, she joined the UST Music faculty, where she made her mark as a good teacher of technique.

"Remembering Marina" is presented by the Manila Chamber Orchestra Foundation Inc. Equitable PCIBank in cooperation with the UST Conservatory of Music.

"PAS-KIA"

Joven Ignacio's environmental art

THE PHILIPPINE SCIENCE HIGH SCHOOL FOUNDATION INC. (PHSHF) and Rockwell Land Inc. present Joven Ignacio's "Artscapes," Jan. 20- Feb. 2, at B-1 North Coast, Stores Plaza Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati.

Ignacio's flora and fauna are noted for their exquisiteness. The works reveal the artist's environmental consciousness.

The exhibit is for the benefit of PSHSF Gadgeteer Program. Event artist is Alyna Bach Pineda. Call 9248603.

"RAYMUNDO"

"CRISTINA"

ComicRelief

GARFIELD — By Jim Davis

A. LIPIN — By Edi Abeda

BABY BLUES — By Jerry Scott

PUGAD BARON — By Pol Jurado

NUTS — By Patrick McDonnell

LOVEBOATS — By Elizabeth Chicangco

ATOMO AND WEBBY — By Lyra Garcellano

DAVAO COMEDY — By Steven Pamaran

THE FIRST VERSION OF THE MERMAID

BIRD MACHINE — By Manix Abrera

HEADBANGERS — By Jomike Tejido

TULOOK — By Pat Lang Tatum Palamuling

BEN — By Daniel Shelton

DAILY CROSSWORD

By Norman T. Whitaker
Clearwater, FL

HOROSCOPE

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green

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1				7			2	
			4	8	2			
	3			1				7
2		8				7		3
9	6		1					
	4	1			5	6		

Difficulty Level ★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	4	2	8	6	3	9	5	1
8	3	9	5	1	2	4	7	6
1	5	6	9	7	4	3	8	2
6	7	5	3	2	1	8	9	4
3	1	8	6	4	9	7	2	5
2	9	4	7	8	5	1	6	3
9	8	1	2	3	6	5	4	7
4	6	7	1	5	8	2	3	9
5	2	3	4	9	7	6	1	8

FOUNDATION FOR LAY EDUC

(a World Heart Federation A

in partnership with the Dept. of Health, Dept. of Education and Dept. of Interior and Local Government and with the support of the

7TH National Annual Conv

Theme: "Issues and Concerns in Pr

January 25-27, 2007, Carlos P. Romulo Audito

Foundation for Lay Education on Heart Diseases

A Profile

By: Adolfo S. Bellosillo, MD, FACC, FSHC, FPCC, FPCE FPCCP
Founding President, FLEHD

INTRODUCTION

As we look to the future of medicine and surgery, very little should be presented, more recognized and highlighted as to the early intensive study on the World Organization's stand for following treatment. Necessary advice disease has reached immense proportion, striking more and more at younger subjects. It will result to the greatest productivity standard has faced today as we able to reverse any unwarranted control rate in cause and correlation.

Non-infectious, indeed, [illegible]

Globally, 50 million die each year, 80% of which are untreated and with other non-infected hypertension and others.

In the Philippines, since the early nineties, heart disease has become the number cause of death among Filipinos.

Despite the medical and surgical advances, with attended even suddenly among the survivors, 20% die while in the hospital and the remainder one of lower social economic class.

The prevention

The cure of medical care is staggering and unrestrained making good medical care beyond the reach of the greater population. In the U.S. and Canada, this decline in deaths due to arteriosclerotic change in the heart which develops control of hypertension, maintaining cholesterol and sugar at normal level, smoking prohibition and exercise, physical activities and recreational activities.

All with change calls for active involvement of the entire community program. And active participation and individual responsibility is enhanced in case of a good educational program.

Who is to educate the?

To educate, of course:

for [illegible]

Before the effort of many physicians to combat, physicians alone cannot do the job adequately. Physicians are only a few and cannot be the sole ones and also be very professional by and other groups, nobody can hand but a national goal "task".

With the advent of mass media, the physician must work arduous to learn, a time very after the patient is up to devise the diagnostic TVs can, the science files all the patient's problem and how to be the knowledge of the disease, the situation that engage an attack, the economic system and possible side effects, etc. The word does not give the physician some assistance in the management of drugs the abuse and for the control is all patients.

Most apparent aspect in communities in economic patterns and education are two of the strongest influences of daily life could be traced to other levels.

In the case to obtain gain, a patient receiving a heart attack, and those who have suffered from the effecting have lowered their diet the education, one could trigger another further more complex, more [illegible] disorder.

In the age of environmental awareness has long been gone.

Today the patient is asked to modify many if not all of his habits. Many of these habits are ingrained in consequence it is unfortunate our country is approaching and in Southeast Asia it is an epidemic.

The executive committee is headed by founding president Dr. Adolfo S. Bellosillo supported by its Director Galicano as secretary by Director Lopez as treasurer and Dr. Alano Gibson, Dr. Chelo Lapeña, Dr. Elisa Hizalde and Dr. Ela Villanueva.

Recognizing the leadership and coordinating roles of the medical societies, the executive council is the member of the committee of the Foundation, presiding with the Department of Health, the Department of Education and the Department of Interior and Local Government are sought resulting in the signing of a memorandum of agreement on July 16, 2001 with Dr. Manuel Dayrit (Health), Gov. Jose De Venecia (Interior), Sec. Edu (DECS).

A study of regional conferences composed of Mrs. Lety Arpilla, Mrs. Cely Bautista and Mr. Ram Lardizabal,

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SPEAKERS

A FLEHD PRAYER

"A PRAYER TO JESUS"

Words and music by Jeremiah "Smiley" Callaway

With much reverence
Lord, we come before Your throne.
We lift our weary hearts;
In You alone we call.
Its strength and wisdom

Lord, in You alone we trust.
Through You we shall prevail.
To divide Jew we can.
To serve Your children.

Chorus:
Bless our hearts, bless our souls.
You as Lord, take control.
Let Jesus level Your love through our souls,
And that grace through our tribulations;
And like we pray in Your Most Holy Name!

Repeat:
Lord, we come before Your throne.
We lift our weary hearts;
In You alone we call.
Its strength and wisdom.

Lord, in You alone we trust.
Through You we shall prevail.
To divide Jew we can.
To serve Your children.

Chorus:
Bless our hearts, bless our souls.
You as Lord, take control.
Let Jesus level Your love through our souls,
And that grace through our tribulations;
And like we pray in Your Most Holy Name!

FLEHD Song of Thanksgiving

Music and Lyrics by Jeremiah Callaway
Joyfully, moderate

Now is the time to rejoice,
to celebrate what we have done;
We've won the salvation for you,
for healthy hearts to prevail.

Let us celebrate, let us celebrate,
giving thanks to the Almighty One.
Let our hearts rejoice,
let our minds be one.
Sing our love and passion in flame;
La la la la la la la la
La la la la la la la la

Repeat:

Now is the time to rejoice,
to celebrate what we have done;
We've won the salvation for you,
for healthy hearts to prevail.

Let us celebrate, let us celebrate,
giving thanks to the Almighty One.
Let our hearts rejoice,
Let our minds be one.
Deep our love and passion in flame;
La la la la la la la la
La la la la la la la la

Let us celebrate, let us celebrate,
Giving thanks to the Almighty One,
we can hearts rejoice,
Let our minds be one.
Deep our love and passion as one:
As one!

HAW HAW HEE

(Comedy by Jeremiah
with input from)
Shelley M. Hafley Callaway
Told at: A. E. Dellaflo, KS

[illegible]

FLEHD FAREWELL SONG

Music and Lyrics by Jeremiah Callaway

[illegible]

THE FLEHD HYMN
SAVE THEM WE ALL MUST DO

Lyrics and Music by: Ansley Callaway
Michael Gilmore Sr. "Farewell Hymn"

[illegible]

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New Charlson Ong novel depicts Tsinoy identity

ANVIL PUBLISHING INC., in cooperation with the UP Institute of Creative Writing, will launch award-winning fictionist Charlson Ong's newest novel, "Banyaga: A Song of War," Jan. 23, 6-10 p.m., at Conspiracy Bar in Quezon City.

The novel focuses on the lives of four immigrants and spans three generations of Chinese-Filipinos (Tsinoys) in the Philippines. It provides a window to the lives of contemporary Chinese Filipinos, with characters drawn with flair and candor as they cope with the conflict of tradition and modernity and the anxieties of urban living.

Ong succeeds in rewriting Philippine history from the point of view of the pro-scripted foreigner long deemed to have no place in the imagined Filipino community.

Caroline S. Hau, writer and literary critic, has this to say about the book: "Banyaga's unflinching and unforgettable portrayal of these immigrants and their familial, business, romantic, political and social entanglements over eight decades effectively demystifies the forgiving myth underwriting surrounding the 'Chinese.' But Ong's main achievement lies in his revelation of the transformative alchemy that turns foreigners into Filipinos and, just as important, Filipinos into someone (and something) at once familiar and indelicately foreign."

Charlson Ong has published three collections of short fiction, "Men of the Fair and Other Stories," "Women of Ashave and Other Stories," and "Conversion and Other Fictions"; and a novel, "Embroidered Mothers." He was born, raised and continues to live in Manila, Philippines.

Call (0)7509[illegible] or log on to www.anvilpublishing.com.

Bio of an officer and a gentleman

"IACTA NON VERBA (ACTIONS NOT Words): The Viceroy Abad Perez Story" will be launched today, 5:30 p.m., at the IBN Pavilion, Pandan Road, North Forbes Park, Makati.

Written by Nelson Navarro, the book chairs the life of Perez, from his days as a scholar at the US Merchant Marine Academy in King's Point, New York (whose motto is the book's title), to his work in the Philippine Navy, and his success as a businessman in the shipping services sector.

Although afflicted with Parkinson's disease in his 60s, he took his lumps like an officer and a gentleman. He died on Sept. 7 before reaching his 66th birthday.

George Sison launches book; Ernie Garcia unveils tile-art works

GEORGE SISON WILL launch his new book, "Feng Shui of the Mind, I Am a Winner," Jan. 27, 6:30 p.m., at Galerie Astra of the UP Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St. (formerly Reposo St.), Bel-Air II, Makati City.

"You have the choice and the power to change what is not working in your life," Sison writes. "What you cannot imagine, you cannot have."

"When people around you no longer want to see themself, it is time to move on," he adds.

Sison is a motivational speaker and counselor. He was a martial law political prisoner, producer and talk-show host, astrologer and clothier, gourmet and restaurateur. He is also composer and lyricist, having written the song "When Tomor Shall I Give You, My Love," made famous by 1970s Concorder and recorded by the second generation of The Platters.

Meanwhile, actor-artist Ernie Garcia will unveil his tile-art works no longer on Filipiniana," a tribute to Elizabeth Taylor.

The collection will be launched at 6 on Jan. 27 at Galerie Astra, and will run until Feb. 10.

The dual launchings are part of this chair anniversary of the UP Business Plaza.

UP Art Space and Galerie Astra are open 10 a.m.–7 p.m., except Sundays.

Call [illegible]

ERNIE Garcia

GEORGE Sison

Book club tackles Gabriel Garcia Marquez novel

POWERBOOKS KICKS OFF ITS POWER Book Club discussions for the new year with Lisa Hoarn's "Brilliance of the Moon" and Gabriel Garcia Marquez's "Memories of My Melancholy Whores."

"Brilliance" brings a satisfying conclusion to Hoarn's "Tales of the Otori" epic fantasy trilogy. The book blends romance and martial arts.

In the final installment, Takeo (Otori) must fulfill the prophecy of a lady woman to reclaim the Otori lands. "Peace comes at the price of bloodshed. Five battles will buy you peace, four in vain and one in love."

Takeo and his beloved wife Kaede Shirahama prepare for a war to recoup their respective realms.

Nobel laureate Garcia Marquez returns to the fiction scene after a decade with "Memories of My Melancholy Whores." The novella begins with the presumptuous, an esteemed nonagenarian declaring to gift himself a night of wild life with an adolescent virgin for his birthday.

However, the night of his 14-year-old "gift" soundly sleeping mesmerizes him, an unexpected love blossoms for the man who has lived 514 women when "he made love without love." The stopped counting them when he was 501. Recounting his sad and silly sexual existence while "searching the object of his affection deep, he discovers for the first time "the improbable pleasure of contemplating the body of a sleeping woman without the capricious of desire or the obstacles of modesty."

Discussions for "Memories" will be held Jan. 30, 6:30 p.m., at PowerBooks Greenhill, while those for "Memories" will be on Jan. 31, 6:30 p.m., at PowerBooks Megamall.

Those who register and sign up for the discussions will receive any PowerBooks brands will get 10 percent off the featured books. Previously Plus holders who sign up get 10 percent off. The first 16 registrants to arrive get silver-engraved coffee from Java Mesa.

PowerBooks has branches at Greenbelt 4 (7574428/29), Megamall (6322898/99), Alabang Town Center (8505562), Glorietta 3 (7527075), Shangri-La (6380032/221), Robinsons Galleria (5251034/5243446), Mall of Asia (5360244), and Festival Supermall (8636231).

Seminars on US working visa in Cebu and Baguio

UNITED STATES-LICENSED IMMIGRATION lawyer Michael Tempo (a JD) of Tempo & Tempo Immigration Consultants is holding a seminar on working in the United States Jan. 21 at the Pegasus Igorot Club, Asiko Hall, 4th Conference Center, and Feb. 3 at Waterfront Hotel, Adriatic Room, Lahug, Cebu, 1-4 p.m.

If you are in the field of IT, telecom, healthcare, finance and accounting, teaching, legal, marketing and advertising, sales, management engineering, architecture, mathematics, sciences, business, theology, arts, you may have the opportunity to legally live and work in the US with a working visa, or what is commonly known as H1B.

Tempo specializes in immigration and litigation cases in New York. He received his Juris Doctor degree from Touro Law in New York and is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

Call 9955964, 0917 5385797 or 0917 4883370.

Classical concert in Cagayan de Oro

THE MORNING HALL OF LICEO DE Cagayan University in Cagayan de Oro will present "All About Love," a tribute concert to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Jan. 26 at 8 p.m.

The concert features soprano Josephine Gomez and pianist Rudolf Golez. Gomez will interpret German lieder as well as Andrew Lloyd Weber compositions.

The concert is for the benefit of the Music of Hope Foundation. Call 09[illegible] or 8[illegible] 158.

THE FUTURE National Artist for theater is a 13-year-old

AS BERNARDA Alba in Lorca's "The House of Bernarda Alba"

The women of Amado Lacuesta Jr.

By Ian Rosales Casocot
Contributor

TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION the films written by the late Amado Lacuesta Jr. is to consider intimately the many facets of the Filipino woman.

Not that Lacuesta exhaustively examined the psychology of the Filipina. He has written only 10 films of divergent concerns as well, some political, and some were merely marks relished for venerable action stars.

For Lino Brocka, the perennial "Macho Dancer" together with Ricardo Lee, which intuition to close the definitive look into the underground lives of gay men; the Tikoy Aguiluz and Ronnie Ricketts, he wrote "Relyong, The Rebel Priest," about the defrocked priest who took up arms against the Marcos regime.

For Bonoy, he wrote "Manahuli," a story of cultural conflict about a doctor who goes home to the Cordillera to bury his father, but finds himself torn between city and country, between modern and traditional ways of healing. He also collaborated on "Bayanihan: Ito'y Sa'ting Lahing Hinirang," about an uprising police officer's struggle against a corrupt judge.

And so Lacuesta's screenplays are a study of women? We can begin with his work for Pablo Santiago's certified Sharon Cuneta blockbuster "Kahit Konting Pagtingin."

But it is his early works which showed historical which will exemplify the relatively short film career of this former newspaper banker.

At 36, his screenplay for "Working Girls" gave him instant critical recognition. When it was released in 1984, "Working Girls" demonstrated six Filipino sensibilities like a shameless, quick-witted, resilient group of Filipino women who "worked hard, played hard, and made and broke rules."

AMADO Lacuesta Jr.

It featured an all-star cast (Gina Pareño, Chanda Romero, Hilda Koronel, Maria Isabel Lopez, Cecil Martin and Ilse Lucio) and dusted the lives of seven working girls in the corporate bowels of Makati—a roving jewelry dealer, an executive, a freelance secretary, a socialite, a secretary impregnated by her boss and a woman who becomes a call girl—and came up with a satire that proved revolutionary.

Another film done included the male centric military of local business and was thus championed as a devout drowning. It preceded the film-themed "Working Girl" directed by Mike Nichols and inspired José Javier Reyes' "Makati Avenue."

His scene Bernal's episode for "Shake, Rattle, and Roll" (the first and best of the now-tired series). In "Forbidden," the story of a redeportee prostitute's evil would have landed the film in the trash of camp, but Lacuesta gave it a new sense of denial. The underscored female sexuality gives the film its edge. Janice de Belen becomes the object of the refugee-son's carnal intentions, a play on the power of a woman's disappointing sexuality.

In Bernal's "Ulingan sa Langit," he cast Sandra Bernhardt and Ricky Davao to seriously engage this female world. Marivel Soriano plays a woman who discovers she's pregnant. She faces moral alternatives to both Amy Austria, a comic woman who urges her to abort it, and Charito Solis, the overly religious landlady who represents the other extreme. Bernal underplayed the melodrama, Lacuesta's script managed to evoke them beyond dramatic enclosures, and gave each a complex humanity.

In Hilda Garcia's "Yang Kasintaas Nito," written with Raquel Villavicencio, the darker side of female psychology is savagely explored, with Gina Alajar in a dual role of a decent woman and her doppelganger, a "friend" who has surgery to look like her and more precisely like she owns and loves.

Lacuesta's last screenplay was for Aguilar's "Inquisitor," written with Pete Lacaba, and is remembered as a masterpiece inexplicably ousted by the MTRCB. Upending the desperation then-only hinted at in "Working Girls," he gave a stark view of things in his story of a top insurance agent (Michelle Aclaud) who moonlights as a CPO.

The sins she atones and survives at night become her insurance clients by day, all too ready to buy what she sells. It revisited the excess of the very '80s concepts of synergy and networking, and gave us a damning indictment of life by Filipinos' short-lived tiger economy and the real circumstances driving it.

Lacuesta—whose accomplishments included the Palanca Award for his stories, and whose passions included photography and history—died from heart attack in Baguio in 1997, his son 49.

The interrogative sometimes is the largest encounter in the collaborative effort of film art, overshadowed by actors and, in terms of authorship, by directors. It is a tragic mistake.

In a career that produced films of consistent excellence and which have given many of our actresses their best, Lacuesta, Aldaba, and many others) the roles of their lives, Lacuesta has the distinction for being a man with worthwhile things to say about women. Lacuesta proved by and large that he was without equal.

A retrospective of Lacuesta's films will be shown at UP Film Institute's Cine Adarna, UP Diliman, Quezon City, Jan. 22-24. Go to mail.cinemaone.com for more details.

Daisy at 90

from page C1

Edades: "You have very good acting in your group, but that young girl who played the maid, she's going to be a star!"

"I've never forgotten what Mrs. Edades told me. There are so many roles, only small actors. That's a lesson I keep telling the young ones. Even in life, it's the same thing. There are so small roles in life, only small people."

Any talk of legacy of her place in Philippine art and culture, and she is too modest.

"Basic ka nalang sa ang" says Lorelei. "Lagi hope to be remembered as a good human being. And that I tried my best. Whether I succeeded in my roles or not, it's important that I did my best."

You did, Ms Avellana, you did.

E-mail the author at gaddiel@inquirer.com.ph, visit www.gibbs.multiply.com

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INQUIRER

Jullie Yap-Daza delivers lecture on journalism

NOTED JOURNALIST JULLIE YAP-Daza will deliver the fourth annual UST Varsitarian-Jose Villa Panganiban (JVP) Professorial Chair for Journalism lecture today (Jan. 22), 3-4 p.m., at the Thomas Aquinas Research Complex auditorium, University of Santo Tomas, España, Manila.

The lecture is hosted by the Varsitarian, the 79-year-old official UST student publication, and the UST Journalism Society.

In her lecture, "Challenges of a Multimedia Journalist," Yap-Daza will discuss the challenges of a multimedia journalist as she has experienced success in both print and broadcast journalism.

An editor of the Varsitarian during her college days, Yap-Daza graduated summa cum laude from the old UST Faculty of Philosophy and Letters (now Faculty of Arts and Letters), with a degree in journalism in 1983. She became a newspaper editor and wrote the witty columns, Medium Rare. She later headed television and television-host of such popular talk shows as "Bill de Clay, Tell the People" and "Jullie!"

She was the editor-in-chief of People (under Times Journal), Chi, Lifestyle Asia and Mastiff Standard. She is now a columnist of the Manila Bulletin and Panorama.

The JVP is an annual lecture on current events and issues on journalism and the media arts. Established in 1999 through an endowment by the Varsitarian, the lecture is named after Jose Villa Panganiban, the founder of the publication.

Panganiban, born on June 12, 1902, was director of the Institute of National Language (now the Komisyon ng Wika) and is acknowledged as one of the literature pioneers and developers of the national language. An award-winning journalist, writer, broadcast, radio personality and linguist, he is best known for his classic work on lexicography, the "Diksyonaryo Tesauro Ingles-Pilipino."

The lecture is open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis.

Call 406-1611 local 8223 or 0917 2490804. E-mail varsitar@yahoo.com.

Pinoy author of the month

NATIONAL ARTIST ADU JAMON Magsaysay [FAC lawyer Bienvenido Lumbera is widely acknowledged as one of the giants of contemporary Philippine literature, cultural studies and film.

In his early days, Lumbera was an adviser of Newsweek Inventors. But he shifted to Philippine studies when he was challenged to complete his doctoral dissertation on Philippine vernacular literature. He started writing Tagalog poetry, essays, plays and journals, also gaining popularity for his literary criticism. He is now considered as the founder of Philippine studies.

In declaring him for the 1997 GM award, the Ril Foundation board of trustees recognized his "savoring the central place of the vernacular tradition in framing a national identity for modern Filipinos."

Some of his writings include textbooks such as "Filipino Writing, Philippine Literature from the Regions" and "Philippine Literature and Anthology."

The books are available at Powerbooks, which has named Lumbera the Pinoy Author of the Month for January.

NATIONAL Artist Bienvenido Lumbera

Filipinos go 'Contactless'!

The BDO International ATM MasterCard PayPass card provides consumers with contactless payment by just tapping their card on a PayPass terminal

The incredible convenience, speed and security of the "contactless" payment solution are now for Filipino consumers to enjoy as Banco de Oro, in collaboration with MasterCard Worldwide, has introduced the first publicly available contactless card program in the Philippines - the BDO International ATM MasterCard® PayPass™ card.

Considered as the "way of the future," the MasterCard *PayPass* contactless payment feature provides consumers with "The Simpler Way to Pay™" by tapping their card on a point of sale (POS) *PayPass*-enabled terminal or reader rather than swiping or inserting their card or handing it to a cashier.

Specially designed to replace cash payments, *PayPass* is well suited for transactions where speed is important – in supermarkets, convenience stores, drive-through outlets, take-away outlets, lollipops, movie theaters, restaurants and mass transport. It also provides more consumer control and security since the card or device does not leave the hands of consumers to be inserted into the terminal by the merchant's personnel.

Filipino *PayPass* card holders can start taking advantage of these benefits offered by the BDO International ATM MasterCard *PayPass* card as a number of establishments have already set up *PayPass*-enabled acceptance terminals – with more expected to follow suit. Among the first local merchants to accept *PayPass* payments are Figaro and Cuppa and Cream at The Podium, ActivVision and Bench at SM Megamall, and Wendy's, SM Cinema / IMAX and French Baker at SM Mall of Asia.

"We are pleased to collaborate with Banco de Oro to bring the contactless payment solution to the Philippines via the BDO International ATM MasterCard PayPass card and let Filipino consumers experience the convenience, speed and security it offers," said Paolo Villa-Real , MasterCard International Philippines Inc. Country manager. "Global interoperability is vital to the success of any payment program and cardholders can now enjoy the ease and convenience of using their *PayPass* cards anywhere in the world where *PayPass* is accepted", he added.

For years, MasterCard has been the industry innovator in contactless payments. From consumer research and development efforts to conducting market trials and standardizing communications protocols for contactless payments, MasterCard has paved the way for the increasing demand and successful roll-out of *PayPass* globally.

MasterCard *PayPass* has already been introduced in several countries including the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Turkey, Lithuania, Malaysia, Australia, Taiwan, South Africa and France. As of 3Q2006, there are over 11 million MasterCard *PayPass* cards and devices issued globally and approximately 36,000 merchant locations deployed around the world and the momentum is continuing.

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You can now "Tap & Go" your BDO International ATM MasterCard PayPass card at establishments, Bench, Cuppa and Cream, Figaro, French Baker, SM Cinema, IMAX Cinema and Wendy's.

ENTERTAINMENT

Edita Enerio G. Velarde

Pinay in 'Dreamgirls'

SHAWN LEE, THE SINGER WHO REplaces Jennifer Hudson's character in the hit movie "Dreamgirls," is a Filipino-American, according to Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia.

Wikipedia says of Shawn's father, Jesse: "[He] was a Master Sergeant in the United States Air Force and was a police officer at Clark Air Base in the Philippines. He now currently teaches at an elementary school. Lee's mother Angelita is married to Ebney Shandall, the father of Lee's younger sister named Krystina Shandall."

Shawn appears midway in "Dreamgirls." She is also featured on the film's soundtrack CD, which has been topping the album sales charts in the United States.

Another good reason to see the award-winning movie.

Richest women in the biz

NEW YORK—OPRAH WINFREY IS the richest woman in entertainment, and few are surprised.

The talk-show titan, who has amassed $1.5 billion over the course of her impressive career, has limited "Harry Potter" author J.K. Rowling and lifestyle guru Martha Stewart to take the No. 1 spot on Forbes.com's list of "The 20 Richest Women in Entertainment."

Rowling, who is finishing the seventh and final installment to her key wizard series, ranks second with $1 billion, forward to third with $810 million.

Madonna ranks fourth with $325 million, followed by Celine Dion, $250 million; Mariah Carey $225 million; Janet Jackson $150 million; Julia Roberts, $140 million; and Jennifer Aniston and Jennifer Lopez both $110 million.

Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, the twin actresses who started out on the '90s comedy "Full House" and created a multimedia empire, Dualstar Entertainment Group, are No. 11 with an estimated "combined net worth of around $100 million," Forbes said.

They are followed by Britney Spears, Judge Judy Sheindlin of TV's "Judge Judy," Sandra Bullock, Cameron Diaz, Gisele Bundchen, Ellen DeGeneres, Nicole Kidman, Christina Aguilera and Renee Zellweger.

Brazilian supermodel Gisele Bundchen is the highest-paid fashion figure, with a personal wealth of $70 million.

Forbes said these rich ladies needed a minimum net worth of $45 million assessed over the course of their careers to make the list.

The list excludes non-working celebrities who live off royalties, such as Audrey Hepburn, and those whom Forbes.com describes as "old Hollywood" types, such as Elizabeth Taylor, confirming the list to have active in recent years. AP

JENNIFER LOPEZ

JULIA ROBERTS

JENNIFER ANISTON

Academics pick 5 best 2006 films

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

GAWAD TANGLAW DE LAHAT TAGApuring mga Akademiko ng Aniweng Dimagalene anounces the winners of its 18th annual contest.

Dr. Adene Ong, president emeritus, says Gawad Tanglaw is "a group of critics, educators, historians and humanities professors."

To mark its 18th year, the group cited five films as the year's best—Jeffrey Jeturian's "Kubrador," Rolando Tolentino's "Kubkob," Jose Javier Reyes' "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo," Pablo Biglang-Awa and Veronica Velasco's "Sana Dati" and Ellwood Anthony Escobar's "Walang Babaeng Isang."

ACADEMICS B2

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No Best Picture favorite in Oscars

LOS ANGELES—THE GOLDEN Globes, trade winners, film critics and just about everyone else in Hollywood have weighed in on 2006's best film achievements, helping to solidify the Academy Awards picture—and maybe even a bit, too.

With Oscar nominations due out tomorrow, a few clear front-runners and some intriguing wild cards have emerged, along with an unusually open race for the top prize.

Still, in some ways known by the Screen Guild of America and Screen Actors Guild, whose nominations came out earlier this month. Those awards should help sort out much of the Oscar outlook, but unlike most years, when a solid favorite often emerges, the Best Picture category could remain up for grabs right up to awards night Feb. 25.

Sure things

Helen Mirren and Forest Whitaker seemingly wrapped up the best actress and actor categories from the minute their films debuted last fall.

Mirren looks unbeatable for her turn as prim Elizabeth II in "The Queen," the brings marvelous laughs-and-humanity to the regal monarch.

If there's a Best Actress dark horse, it's Penelope Cruz, who delivers a career performance full of heart and bravado in "Volver," playing a woman coping with possible supernatural crises in her domestic life.

The puzzle

The quiet, even-keeled Whitaker, known more for hushed menace or gentle humor, explodes on screen as Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in "The Last King of Scotland."

The only actor with an outside chance at usurping Whitaker's Oscar crown is Ryan O'Neale, as a frail but still ferocious old actor in "Venus."

Most years, a front-runner or two has emerged by now, but no clear favorite has stepped forward from this season's far-flung group of Best Picture contenders.

Almost certain to grab nominations are the musical "Dreamgirls," the crime saga "The Departed" and the romance-by-numbers "The Queen." The international drama "Babel" also looks like a safe bet, and the road tale "Little Miss Sunshine" has a strong shot to become a rare comedy that sneaks into the Best Picture mix.

Clint Eastwood's World War II navigation films, "Letters From Iwo Jima" and "Flags of Our Fathers," have outside chances, though neither has caught much fire with earlier awards or audiences. The suburban crisis drama "Little Children" also has a shot.

As a James Brown-like soul trailer in "Dreamgirls," Eddie Murphy took like a solid Supporting Actor frontrunner.

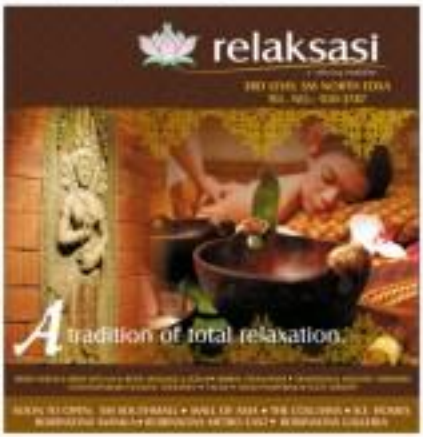
Director Martin Scorsese could go down in the books as one of the all-time biggest Oscar failures. With five nominations and no wins, Scorsese is tied with four other directors for "biggest" filmmaker at each has would make him the record holder.

Looking good

His prospects look good this time with "The Departed," though the same was true two years ago, when he lost to Clint Eastwood, whose "Million Dollar Baby" won, beating "The Aviator" for Best Picture.

Eastwood scored two directing nominations for the Golden Globes with "Flags of Our Fathers" and "Letters From Iwo Jima," though his Oscar size faded after he was shut out from a Directors' Guild nomination.

Scorsese recently won at the Golden Globes. AP



DID YOU KNOW...

Real mom

ACTRESS AND DIrector Laurice Guillen returns to the theater scene as Amanda Wingfield in Tanghalang Ateneo's stage adaptation of Tennessee Williams's "The Glass Menagerie."

And her real-life daughters, Ana and Isa Feleo, alternately play Amanda's wife-dreamer child, Laura.

Natanda is like mommy," Isa says. "She's madness, and likes to tell stories."

The play runs until Feb. 10 at the Rizal Mini Theater, Ateneo de Manila University. Tuesdays to Thursdays and Fridays at 7 p.m. and Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Sundance Smiles

From 'industry' to 'indiestry'

THE MOVIE TIMES HAVE CHANGED in many major ways in the past 10 years.

Local film production plummeted from 200 features a year down to 30. Digital filmmaking has both democratized and moved the Filipino film industry.

Action superstars have all but stopped making movies, and it's now hosts who are running (pun intended) the movies. Multiplexes have become the dominant movie venue. Video prints have zoomed up from P35 to P50 and beyond.

Television has become still competition, offering "free" entertainment and most of the stars who used to be seen only on the big screen.

Faced with these challenges, most movie producers have folded up their tents, leaving hundreds of movie workers jobless. Some still-appointed doom-and-gloomers have even held wakes to mourn the "death" of Filipino films.

And yet, in the midst of all the shadows and surrounding, movies continue to be made, as others death are not talking about. The death of (and, of) format, maybe. The memories of the latest are not serious, perhaps. The decade of quickies and shorties, definitely.

Encouraged by festivals and competitions like Cinemalaya, independent filmmakers have been teaming up with new digital feature after another, boosting the industry's annual production figures last year to over 100.

In the light of this digital upsurge, the industry's downward spiral is now officially over.

And yet, the movie industry's woes haven't flouted away on the proverbial pink cloud of the Happy Ending Optimistic Posthumous is more like it, but most problems have preserved themselves, and need be solved before the years can truly be close.

Bottom line

Bottom line: The salvation of local movies lies in recommended digital filmmaking, with its fresh talents and fantastic. Unfortunately all these plus factors haven't translated into big enough audiences to support the new investment.

In addition, digital features have been criticized for looking technically inferior, speaking to us personal and accessible a language, and disinteresting the main stream audience.

Some indie filmmakers tried to solve the situation by "going mainstream" in many ways, but the effort usually backfired. In the end, the new "indie industry" has to find its niche by being itself, and finding solutions to its unique problems.

The technical deficiencies need to be compensated for without adding too much to digital movies' notoriously low-cost budgets. How loudly have to be tastefully chosen and built up, not just for talent but also for charisma, as commercial movies can rarely go to them.

Most cinemas capable of screening digital features should be set up in key cities all over the country, so the indie investment can truly "go national."

Above all, indie movies should offer characters and situations that people can readily identify with and warm up to.

This was proven by the most-viewed digital movie to date, Yang Fenglishings ni Marilyn Oliveros," when it played to grad houses during its commercial run. It was about a boyfriend and family, but it was about a *family*, and most viewers could relate to that.

Let's hope these and other changes can be put in place soonest, so the movie "industry" can truly become the "industry" as the 80s dream apparently doesn't exist fortunately to become.

Nestor U. Torre

Ventinder

VETERAN actress and now facist gather at the ongoing Sundance Festival in Utah, from top left, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Laura Linney, Diego Luna and Elliot Page.

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Academics pick 5 best 2006 films

From page B1

...to [illegible] for Best Direction.

Best Actress is Glaiza Pamela of "Kubrador," which also receives Best Story, Screenplay (Rolando S. Jimenez and Jinkoberto Chester Antonio.

"I'm very happy for Kubrador," especially since those awards are [illegible] for them," Pamela says.

Ramon Bautista is Best Actor ("Gamot Zamot, rak At Marriott"), Chokoleit ("Zamot/rak") and Anne D'Ignacio ("Twilight Zamot") share the Best Supporting Actor award.

"It's a pleasant surprise," says Pardilla. "I wasn't thinking of awards when I did the movie. I just had fun."

Celia Rodriguez is Best Supporting Actress for "Liquid," which also receives the Best Cinematography (Lilbeto Manzi) and Best Editing (Jason Colango and Eda Orandel) honors.

The awards ceremony is set March 1, 5 p.m. at the University of Perpetual Help in Las Piñas City.

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AT THE CINEMAS

G1	1 BANA I	2 DEJA VU	3 [illegible]	4 AGENT 444			
G4	1 BLOOD DIAMOND	2 KABAL KABALI KABALO	3? DEJA VU				
	4 INNOCENT VOICES	5 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES	6 DRAGON	7 BANA I			
GB1	1 BANA I	2 DEJA VU					
GB3	1? DRAGON	2? DEJA VU					
	3 INNOCENT VOICES	4 BANA I	5 BLOOD DIAMOND				
ATC	1? DEJA VU	2 DRAGON					
	3 BANA I	4 AGENT 444	5 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES				
ACC	1 DEJA VU	2 BANA I	3 A GOOD YEAR	4 AGENT 444			
M2	1 AGENT 444	2 DEJA VU					
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ROUNDUP

"My Grammy Moment"

LOS ANGELES—HOT ON THE HEELS OF Fox's "American Idol," five finalists have been named to compete for the chance to join him with singer Justin Timberlake at the Grammy Awards.

Fans voting online at Yahoo! Music narrowed the field from 12 finalists in the "My Grammy Moment" contest for unsigned artists, namely: Alicia Miranda, 18, of Montgomery, Alabama; Jillian Candleria, 23, of Long Branch, New Jersey; Brenda Rodney, 22, of Staten Island, New York; Robyn Troup, 18, of Houston, Texas; and Jessica Jones, 18, of Warner Robins, Georgia.

Online and text message votes during the 49th annual Grammy Awards, which will be telecast Feb. 11, by CBS Corp.'s CBS network from the Staples Center, will determine the contest's winner.

The winner will be announced live on the show. AP

KEITH CURATA

NCCA spokesperson

Singer Keith Curato is this year's spokesperson of the National Arts Month (February) celebration titled "Philippine Arts Festival" spearheaded by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

Curata was chosen for being a "role model for the youth." She won the Awit Award for Female Vocalist gold medal at the World Championships of Performing Arts last year in Hollywood, California.

Celebrity billiards

"Odyssey," a celebrity billiard tournament, will be held on Jan. 24 at the Tantoco in Promenade, Greenhills, San Juan. Mona Alcuaz at 5 p.m.

Representatives from entertainment, business and politics have been invited to join the competition. Winners will challenge Efren "Bata" Reyes.

Among the guest players are Ogie Alcasid, Dingdong Dantes, Christopher de Leon, Eddie Garcia, James Gibbs, Gabe Mercado, Vilma Santos, Manuel Lorenzo and Eula Valdez.

New series

Starting Feb. 2, Discovery Channel's "Everything You Need To Know" premiers new episodes every Friday at 7 p.m.

The new series delves into topics that range from ghosts to weather phenomena to how our brains work.

"EVERYTHING You Need to Know"

JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE

Peter Pan live

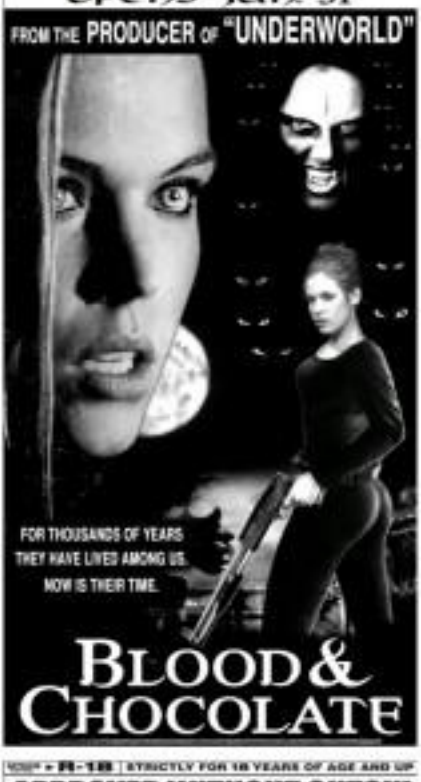
Dinner at Spiral, Sofitel Philippine Plaza, can meet the cast of "Peter Pan," the musical, every Saturday and Sunday between 11 a.m. and 12 noon, until Feb. 4.

They can have snapshots with Peter Pan and friends, and get their autographs.

All "Peter Pan" ticket holders are entitled to a 15 percent discount at Spiral and the Sunset Barbecue upon presentation of their ticket at the reception.

Call 555-5555.

OPENS JAN. 31



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5 of the most eagerly awaited movies based on comic books

HERE ARE THE FIVE MOST eagerly awaited comic-to-film adaptations:

"Spiderman 3"

Director Sam Raimi was not initially a big fan of Sonam's. Now, Spidey fans will finally get to see the villain on the big screen. Woody will be played by actor Topher Grace.

The sequel also brings the characters Green Harry (Harry Dollar Howard), Sandman (Thomas Haden Church) and Harry Osborn (James Franco) as secondary villains.

"The Dark Knight"

"Batman Begins" (2005) didn't take in "X-Men" money. But the inclusion of the villain Joker in the next sequel film is expected to bring in more viewers.

Heath Ledger plays The Clown Prince.

Directed by Christopher Nolan, it starts filming soon, for a 2008 release.

"300"

"Dawn of the Dead's" Zack Snyder directed this adaptation of Frank Miller's graphic novel. Shot on a Montreal soundstage, "300" recreates ancient Sparta and the last stand made by 300 of its warriors against Persia.

The cast includes Gerard Butler, Dominic West, David Wenham and Lena Headey.

For release in March 2007.

"Ghost Rider"

Comic book aficionado Nicolas Cage plays biker Johnny Blaze whose flaming skull alter ego takes on the demonic Peter Fonda and Wes Bentley in the movie directed by "Daredevil" filmmaker Mark Steven Johnson. Eva Mendes co-stars.

The fiery movie opens next month.

"Wonder Woman"

Joss Whedon writes and directs the Amazonian goddess' big-screen adventure for "The Matrix" producers Joel Silver. No actress has been cast, despite rumors pointing to such contenders as Kate Beckinsale, Mischa Barton and Charisma Carpenter.

Relax, champ tells seekers of stardom

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

AT THE INQUIRER'S RECENT ANNIVERSARY party, world champ Ani Madela sang a medley of show-stoppers by Marvin Silvestre, Gary Valenciano, Regine Velasquez, Lani Misalucha and Sharon Cuneta.

"It's my tribute to the icons," he explained.

Madela, who topped the 2000 World Champagnat Pageant of Performing Arts (WCOPA or the Talent Olympics) in Hollywood, admitted that he still gets stomach volcanoes he works with those "icons."

At age six, he was a big "Sharonista," he said. "I artiste to her, and my mom mailed back a letter and photo that, they said, came from Sharon Cuneta, so I wouldn't get lost. I was already in high school when I found out!"

When he guested on the Megastar's show recently he was caught off guard when she asked him for an autograph.

"She asked me to sign a copy of my CD, 'Songs Revisited,' and said she had bought the CD. I didn't know what to write!"

Be flexible

He hasn't gotten used to lobotoblog with celebs, though he worked with the likes of Martin Nievera and Gary Valenciano on the weekly ASAP-CBN variety show, "ASAP 21."

And he shares CD credits with some of his idols on the Star Records tribute-album for the Heading band, "Standing."

"My track on the album, 'Sino Ito Ako,' is very simple but beautiful and full of emotion. Quite a change, because I am better known for thrilling."

He has since made "variety" his goal as performer. "I don't want to bore people. Thus, flexibility is a piece of advice he wishes to impart to newcomers cheered on by the numerous near-non-singing contests.

"Bibo, they should try to be more comfortable onstage, not too self-conscious. They should just have fun," he said. "The audience senses it if you are stressed."

He emphasized the importance of constantly honing one's craft. He did, they figuratively, a show-runner in Manila in the summer.

"Thinking should never stop." Ani said. "After every TV appearance, my dad evaluates my performances. Performers should always learn constructive criticism."

JED MADELA

Another 'Wuthering Heights' adaptation

By Nini Valera

"WUTHERING HEIGHTS," EMILY BRONTE'S gothic tale of love and revenge, has been the subject of numerous adaptations, including the latest love romance between DMA Films and Regal Entertainment, Inc.

Titled "The Promise," the Hilar Tantoco film stars Richard Gutierrez and Angel Locsin in the roles of Heathcliff and Catherine, whose romance birds thought's tickle-and-torn.

In 1991, Richard Gomez and Gloria Zaldarra played those characters in Carlitos Siguion-Reyna's "Hihintayin Kita Sa Langit."

A famous US film adaptation was William Wyler's "Wuthering Heights" in 1939, with Sir Laurence Olivier and Merle Oberon portraying the star-crossed lovers.

Mby Gibbi Films signed for a "remake of a remake" for its Valentine offering is another love story. "I fell in love with 'Hihintayin' when I saw it," said GMA Films president Annette Gozon-Abrogar.

Like "Hihintayin," "Promise" was written for the screen by Raquel Villavicencio, who described her new outfit as "very different." For one, she said, the "Promise" lead stars are younger than Gomez and Zaldarra, real-life lovers at the time of "Hihintayin."

But Abrogar noted that the screen chemistry between Gutierrez and Locsin is as hot as Richard and Gloria's, even if they are not yet as celebrated. "The lead actors have yet to be shot, but the leading scenes already show passion."

They are trying to stick to a P10-million budget, Abrogar also said, adding that Gibbi films has full creative control, but that they can in Regal's US distribution channels they encounter problems.

Abrogar also sought the blessings of Arnulfo Siguion-Reyna, "Hihintayin" producer. "She was all for it," Abrogar said.

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6 SAW 3
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4 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
5 BLOOD DIAMOND
6 SAW 3
7 ERAGON
8 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

NOVALICHES
1 DEJA VU
2 ERAGON
3 AGENT X44
4 SAW 3
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6 AGENT X44

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Drew likes to run naked through the fields—but only in Ireland

NEW YORK...FORMER HOLLYWOOD WILD child Drew Barrymore likes nothing more than ripping off her clothes and running naked through the fields—although apparently only in Ireland, according to a recent interview.

"I'll drive in Ireland and park my car and run out into the field and rip all my clothes off and just run in the wheat fields naked," the actress says in an interview with Parade magazine due out this week.

The star also recalls another naked incident, when she flashed talk show host David Letterman live on network television in 1995.

"I'm so glad I was as free as one point in my life," she says.

She adds that she is aware the nine might raise a few eyebrows.

"I think it shocks people, because I'm so responsible now that when I do it, it's almost surprising rather than, 'Oh, that's just her doing her thing again.'"

Barrymore is the voice of one of Holly wood's gross-acting dynasties. Her latest film, the romantic comedy "Music and Lyrics," opens next month.

AFP

DREW BARRYMORE

Brangelina in New Orleans

LOS ANGELES—Globe-trotting Hollywood couple Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt have moved to New Orleans and plan to send their three children to school there, Us Weekly magazine reported on Tuesday.

"We love it there," Jolie was quoted as saying in confirming the move at the Golden Globe awards ceremony in Los Angeles last week. "The kids are going to go to school there. We're really looking forward to it." Brangelina were by Pitt, 43, and Jolie, 31, could not immediately be reached for comment.

But according to the story posted on the magazine's Web site, the couple's relocation to the flood ravaged Louisiana city is at least partly in keeping with their off-screen devotion to various humanitarian causes around the world.

Brangelina, Us Weekly the movie star pair moved to the Big Easy on Jan. 11 and have purchased a $3.5 million, six-bed mansion in the city's French Quarter—the fourth house owned by the couple.

One diner at a Decatur Street restaurant told the magazine he saw Jolie quietly eating with the locals the day after she and Pitt moved in town.

Reuters

ANGELINA Jolie and Brad Pitt

RUSHES

KARYLLE and Dingdong Dantes

No wedding plans yet

SINGSONG Danisa will has to talk to girlfriend Kapa Technophat, star known as singer Karylle, about marriage.

"We have been together for about two years," Dingdong, 26, said, "but we have no plans...yet." The actor, who won in the GMA underwater battle series "Bubuwits," said it was better not to discuss marriage just now, "so that, when the time comes, it will be special and not something that we talk about everyday."

But Dingdong has plans for this year, now that "Bubuwits" is coming to a close (in mid February). Among them is to go back to school at the Ateneo University to finish his degree in Interdisciplinary Studies. "I have three semesters to go," the actor said.

Dingdong, 26, said he has nothing lined up after "Kalamkan" because he is concerned with the quality of his projects. "It's not about the money. I learned a lot of things with Kalamkan." (Its' instance) I learned to work harder despite constraints during the shoot."

He also learned to hold his breath longer for underwater scenes, shot in Anilao. "We had training," said Dingdong, "but it was still tough to do the beginning."

But he's not holding his breath when it comes to the future. "It will come," he said. "I just don't know what it will bring."

Abel Pabroa

"Dharma" pregnant

LOS ANGELES— Actress Jenna Elfman, who starred in TV's "Dharma & Greg," is expecting her first child, her spokeswoman said.

Elfman and her husband, actor Bodhi Elfman, have been married for 10 years and are "elated about the impending birth," publicist Janet Brennan said in a statement Friday.

Dream looks and born amazing. She is certain to be one hot mama!" Brennan said.

Elfman, 35, played free-spirited Dharma Finkelmeyer Montgomery in the odd-couple comedy "Dharma & Greg," which ran from 1997-2002 on ABC.

She recently starred in the CBS comedy "Courting Alex."

AP

Pacino as Dali

LOS ANGELES—American actor Al Pacino will play Salvador Dali in a new film about the eccentric Spanish surrealist painter's final years, Hollywood's trade press reported Friday.

The film will be adapted from a book by Belgian journalist and novelist Stan Lauryssens, a former neighbor of Dali, who died in 1989 at the age of 84, Variety said.

AFP

Next time, research!

SYDNEY—US pop star Pink has sheepishly backed away from a campaign to boycott Australian wool amounting from allegations that Sydney's Down Under are treasure sheep.

The singer, due to tour Australia in April, admitted Wednesday that she had not done enough research before joining the campaign by the US-based People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

On to PETA video last year, Pink is sealed that practice of sheep "mulesing" as "sadistic." Mulesing involves cutting off chunks of flesh from lambs' rumps to prevent flystrike—an infestation of flesh-eating maggots.

But after receiving a letter from Australian sheep farmers and hearing advice that they opposed the campaign, "mulesing" by 2010, Pink told Australia's Nine Network television she had not been fully informed.

"I probably could have been a lot more researched, on my own. That's the lesson I'm taking from this," she said.

AFP

Rehab, then world tour

NASHVILLE, Tennessee— Country singer Keith Urban, who has completed his treatment for alcohol abuse, will start back onto stage with a short run at club shows in the United Kingdom and Germany in April, his spokesman said Tuesday.

The shows will launch Urban's world tour in support of his latest album, "Love, Pain & the whole crazy thing," the singer's spokesman, Paul Freundlich, announced Tuesday.

Urban, 39, sought treatment just before the album came out in November, forcing him to cancel shows and several TV appearances.

KEITH URBAN

The Australian-reared singer and his wife, actress Nicole Kidman were married in Sydney in June, and then moved to Nashville, where he records. They were seen together in Australia last last month.

AP

Diana on "Idol"

NEW YORK—Diana Ross says she is a born woman three days. At long in fact, she has not had time to see the hit film "Dreamgirls," which is loosely based on her life as a Motown starlet.

The singer told CBS "Late Show" host David Letterman on Tuesday she is going to be a mentor on Fox's "American Idol" and is planning a world tour in March to promote her new album, "I Love You."

Ross said she did not see the musical version of "Dreamgirls" on Broadway.

When Letterman asked if she was curious about the film, Ross joked: "Yes, I've heard a lot about it. I'm going to see it with my lawyers."

AP

Speaking of the show ...

LOS ANGELES—The "American Idol" auditions in Seattle, dubbed the "weirdest servant in history" by host Ryan Seacrest, more than lived up to the billing.

"What the bloody hell was that?" British judge Simon Cowell said on Wednesday's show after enduring a unique version of "Unchained Melody" offered by an aspiring singer from Georgia.

In fact, the two-day tryout for Fox's hit singing talent was a real zoo.

One big-eyed, haired hopeful was compared to a "bush baby," a jungle animal, by the usually caustic Cowell, who termed another contestant, a 6-foot-4 woman, a "giraffe."

Seattle was one of seven cities where auditions were held last summer. The next episode, on Tuesday, will feature the Memphis, Tennessee, version.

"You could be in a bath with your mouth open and you wouldn't sing," Cowell told one woman who insisted that a drink of water would smooth her delivery.

AP

Speaking of winners ...

LOS ANGELES—Singer Kelly Clarkson will soon be showing her curling recipes to the biggest participants in NASCAR as her sister-in-law with a music artist, the actor racing franchise announced.

"Anyone who knows me knows I'm a race fan and love NASCAR," the former "American Idol" and Grammy-winning singer said in a NASCAR press release on Monday. "I look forward to hanging out with the fans, drivers and the entire NASCAR community."

Clarkson will be "integrated in on all aspects of NASCAR," including television spots, charitable events and NASCAR's namesake dinner in New York City in December, NASCAR said.

The 24-year-old singer rose to pop-rock stardom after snagging the first "American Idol" crown in 2002.

AP

Who drinks this?

TOKYO—Actor-rapper Will Smith promised the Japanese prime minister with two bottles of wine on a visit to Tokyo Thursday—only he fled out Chinese the wine instead.

The surprised to be gift of red and white bottles of wine from Smith, who met with him on a visit to the capital to promote his new movie. "I don't drink alcohol, but my wife does," she said as he accepted the souvenirs.

Smith, decked out in a beige jacket and a brown shirt and tie, admitted he was jittery about the meeting. "It was the first time I met a prime minister, so I was a little nervous," he said, smiling and warm and caring. It seems like Japan is in good hands."

AFP

JENNA ELFMAN

AL PACINO

PINK